NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP

SMOKING, BRAND AFFINITY AND YOUTH CULTURE IN BRITAIN 1975-2000

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to any other university for the award of any other degree.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers factors impacting the cigarette smoking habits of young adults in Britain between 1975 and 2000. Specifically it covers the aspects of starting, switching brands and stopping smoking, and as such, the ways in which brand affinity changed during this time. It assesses marketing material and outputs alongside internal creative briefs and documentation from marketing agencies and tobacco companies. It uses an oral history approach to gather memories of smokers during this time, to understand the economic, social, cultural, political, geographical and class factors that impacted their smoking decisions.

During 1975-2000 the disruption and noise interference of subcultures ebbed and flowed, whilst its members and affiliates made decisions on smoking influenced by peers; a politically driven economic and social environment; and the changing face of marketing. All of this was in the context of a government that was anxious not to be the nanny state, and yet had a moral obligation to discourage smoking.

Whilst there are a few academic articles on the effectiveness of marketing/branding on youth smoking habits,[1] and on the impact of state intervention to young people[2], there seem to be very little consideration of smoking from the young consumer's perspective of identity or brand affinity.[3] This thesis aims to address that gap, partly through an analysis of oral history, and reaches a number of distinct conclusions around the intersection of marketing, cigarette smoking, and youth culture.

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[1] Susan Anderson et al, Strategic marketing in the UK tobacco industry, *The Lancet Oncology*, Volume 3, Issue 8, 2002, 481-486

[2] Crawford Moodie et al, Tobacco marketing awareness on youth smoking susceptibility and perceived prevalence before and after an advertising ban, *European Journal of Public Health*, Volume 18, Issue 5, October 2008, 484–490

[3] Amos, A, et al, *A Review of Young People and Smoking in England.* Public Health Research Consortium, 2009;
Amos, A, et al, Healthy or druggy? Self-image, ideal image and smoking behaviour among young people. *Social Science & Medicine, 45*(6), 847–858.

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INTRODUCTION

Like many things taboo to teenagers - alcohol, coffee, automobiles, sex - cigarettes are part of the rite of passage to adult life. The practice of smoking is imbued with the same novelty and drama as everything else happening during that time of transition. The messages conveyed by certain brands are absorbed during these impressionable years, and for adults looking back, those brands come to represent a part of their adult identity. It is no wonder that cigarette brands enjoy some of the highest brand loyalty in consumer marketing. Once a smoker embraces a brand, he or she is not likely to switch.[4]

This study explores the cigarette smoking habits of young adults in Britain between 1975 and 2000. Specifically it considers the factors involved in starting, switching brands and stopping smoking, and as such, explores the ways in which brand affinity changed during this time. The project is primarily based around an oral history approach to gather memories of smokers during this time, and to understand factors that impacted their smoking and brand decisions.

While marketing was doubtless important in some ways (although not necessarily in the ways advertisers imagined, as we shall see), young people's choices were also shaped by geography, class and peer-group contexts and especially perceptions of youth subcultures.

This chapter introduces several contextual discussions to position the rest of the thesis. Firstly, it will consider the contemporary social and political background for young people and cigarette smoking between 1975 – 2000.Whilst some historians, such as Tinkler and Hilton have

[4] Michael Thibodeau and Jana Martin, *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: Branding and Design in Cigarette Packaging* (Abbeville Press, 2000), 6.

studied the smoking habits of young people, I have found no academic literature that considers cigarette marketing and brand interaction with youth culture. Therefore the next part of this chapter will review some of the established literature for the intersecting topics of a) cigarette marketing and young people, including the application of marketing theory to the history of cigarette consumption and b) subcultural theory and youth development, including thoughts on how the lens of ordinariness is just as pertinent to this study as the common approaches to subcultural analysis. Next, it will consider the questions to be asked in the study and how they will be answered, before giving a navigational guide to the following chapters.

The thesis focuses on 1975-2000, when the marketing and consumption of cigarettes in young people took place beneath an umbrella of significant political, economic and social change. The political move into an era of neo-liberalism between 1979 and 1997 (and under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher until 1990) was significant. Whilst a key tenet of Thatcherism (alongside free enterprise, service efficiencies and Victorian values) was a nationalist agenda, the reality was that the experiences of the British people during the period were shaped by class and geographical divisions as health and wealth inequalities deepened.[5] Shifts in individual and group identity were made in the context of Thatcher's assertion that there is 'no such thing as society' – whilst the rhetoric of this came to be associated with an encouragement of individualism and reduction of reliance on the state, the reality did not necessarily match the ambition. Unemployment more than doubled to three million between 1979 and 1983, by which time over 30% of 16-17 year olds were unemployed and claiming benefits.[6] Civil society however, in the form of voluntary and social groups, unions and

[5] David Dixon, 'Thatcher's People: The British Nationality Act 1981', *Journal of Law and Society* 10, no. 2 (1983): 161–80.
Scott-Samuel A et al, The impact of Thatcherism on health and well-being in Britain. *International Journal of Health Services*. 2014;44(1), 53-71
[6] Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Social Survey Division. *Labour Force Survey, 1975*, 1984

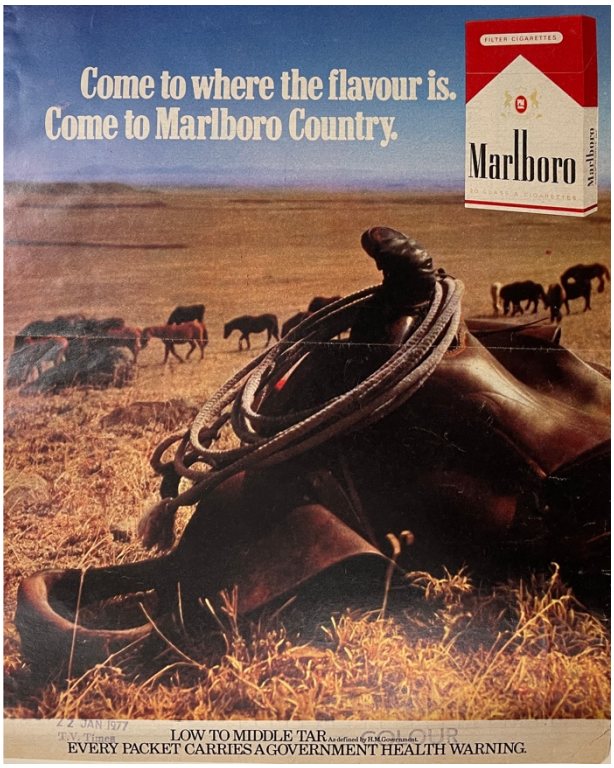

Figure 1 - Marlboro ad (1977), History of Advertising Trust

Figure 2- Benson & Hedges ad (1986) History of Advertising Trust

subcultures, thrived in the face of reduced state support. Arguably, the growth of these 'microsocieties' actually encouraged individualism – whilst it was important for young people to belong to something, it was also possible, through membership, action, or just by wearing a badge, to associate with multiple factions, thereby creating an individual identity. Cigarette smoking was part of this phenomenon, and brand affinity a further facet to the identity of young people.

Cigarettes had a strong historical and contemporary presence in everyday life: by the end of the Second World War, 80% of the adult male population smoked cigarettes. There was a reduction up to the mid-1970s (51% of men and 41% of women were smoking in 1974), but decreases beyond this point slowed amongst younger smokers.[7] In some cases brands were strong

[7] 'Adult smoking habits in Great Britain', Office for National Statistics, accessed April 5, 2023. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/drugusealcoholandsmoking/datasets/adultsmokinghabitsingreatbritain

enough to lead individual identity and become the most important badge of all (see chapter two for the importance of badge marketing to individual identity). And whilst cigarette marketing may have tried to lead the way in pushing brand images, many of which had links to Thatcherite themes,[8] the empirical findings of this study will argue that the definition and attraction of brands was driven more by peer influence, fashion and myth than by marketing, and thereby becoming an example of a rejection of the neo-libertarian agenda, all within the context of the adolescent dilemma of whether to fit in or define a unique identity.

In considering the scholarly literature associated with this study, I will begin with tobacco, young people and marketing in Britain. Looking first at marketing theory, it is instructive to consider Wilkie & Moore's '4 Eras' of Marketing Thought: 'Founding the Field' (1900-1920); 'Formalising the Field' (1920-1950); 'Paradigm Shift – Marketing' (1950-1980); and 'Fragmentation of the Mainstream' (1980–2000),[9] In the first era, marketing is aligned with distribution; in the second era the principles of marketing are developed; in the third era more scientific, data-driven and strategic approaches were developed; and in the fourth era, fragmentation, philosophical assessment and knowledge based segmentation begin to dominate marketing thought. Wilkie and Moore were focused primarily on the US, and movements in marketing thought will not necessarily align directly with marketing practices, but for cigarette marketing in Britain, there is a reasonable fit to these eras and the first three provide a good framework for a historical background to this study.

Between 1900 and the First World War, cigarette consumption escalated, initially driven by and supporting mass production. This period roughly translates to the "Founding the Field". Early 20th century cigarette advertising used similar themes to other products of the time – patriotism,

[8] For example, aspirational Benson & Hedges gold, or strong libertarian Marlboro men advertising.
[9] Wilkie, William L., and Elizabeth S. Moore. "Scholarly Research in Marketing: Exploring the '4 Eras' of Thought Development." *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 22, no. 2 (October 1, 2003): 116–46.

cartoons and claims of national superiority were common across advertisements, and this aligned with channels of distribution. Before billboards, painted walls were often used to promote both brand and availability. Promotional cigarette cards were introduced as an inducement to stay with a brand; these gave way to coupons which could be collected for catalogue gifts. The First World War allowed patriotism to blend with mass marketing in association with the British 'Tommy' – Hilton states that the war 'democratised the cigarette more than any other event to produce a commodity so central to that process of cultural Blackpooling that JB Priestley claimed typified the new egalitarian spirit of mass society'.[10]

Figure 3 - 1929 Kensitas ad alamy

The period between 1918 and the late 1940's fits well to the "Formalising The Field" definition, as principles and processes of marketing were defined. Several themes developed during this time. Firstly, systems matured – Hilton describes this as the 'final stage in the rationalisation of the industry'[11] as roles emerge for selling committees, advertising inspectors and company representatives. Secondly, themes of fitness and health were developed, particularly in the 20's

[10] Hilton, Matthew. *Smoking in British Popular Culture, 1800-2000 : Perfect Pleasures*. Manchester University Press. 2000 p126
[11] Ibid, p90

Figure 4 - 1928 Wix advert
The Times

and 30's. Kensitas ran a series of advertisements aimed at men and women, warning of the dangers of gaining weight by not smoking.[12]

And, in common with the endorsements of film and sports personalities that had been so dominant in the US, brands in the UK used the footballers of the day to advertise. Thirdly, the emergence of mass market branding reflected the maturing selling processes – not only were local (and less profitable) tobacco products eased out, but brands became more obviously directed at market sectors, be that male, female, sporting or aspirational.

Whilst, for the tobacco industry, the third era of marketing thought developed in the 1950s with greater, data driven, consumer understanding and alignment, it was also the point at which industry, in the words of David Courtwright, discovered 'the limits…to physical addiction. A growing body of scientific evidence, which reached critical mass in the early 1950s, linked cigarette smoking to cancer and other deadly diseases.'[13] The tobacco industry in the US responded by setting up the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (TIRC), ostensibly to fund research into tobacco use and health, but in practice to provide positive PR for smoking and to

[12] Daniel O'Neill and Anna Greenwood, '"Bringing You the Best": John Player & Sons, Cricket, and the Politics of Tobacco Sport Sponsorship in Britain, 1969–1986', *European Journal for the History of Medicine and Health* 80, no. 1 (11 August 2022) 152–84
[13] David T Courtwright, '"Carry on Smoking": Public Relations and Advertising Strategies of American and British Tobacco Companies since 1950', *Business History* 47, no. 3 (2005): 421–33.

debunk the 'anti-cigarette theory'[14]. Meanwhile, in 1956, UK tobacco companies formed the Tobacco Manufacturer's Standing Committee (TMSC), later named the Tobacco Research Council (TRC), then the Tobacco Advisory Panel (TAP), which absorbed the Tobacco Advisory Committee, whose role had developed to 'become more concerned with public relations issues and commercial matters of significance to its members'.[15] Certainly the TAC worked hard to lobby and entertain MPs and Lords, to counter industry threats, and to develop positive PR.[16]

Figure 5 – People love Player's ad (1961) www.nottinghamprints.co.uk

With these defences in place, and a burgeoning marketing industry fed by post-war economic boom, consumer demand, and real data, the cigarette agencies went to work. In the UK, marketing grew massively in the post Second World War period, with tobacco spending as one of the most aggressive growth areas, with over £10m per annum spent in 1960 and third highest only to food and drink and clothing.[17] Many campaigns fought back in a spirit of denial - Daniel O'Neill describes the 'People Love Players' campaign of the

[14] Tobacco Industry Research Committee, Tobacco Tactics. 2020. ttps://tobaccotactics.org/article/tobacco-industry-research-committee/
[15] House of Commons, Minutes of Evidence. 2000. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmhealth/27/0020903.htm
[16] Tobacco Advisory Council – TobaccoTactics. 2021 https://www.tobaccotactics.org/article/tobacco-advisory-council/
[17] David Clayton, 'Advertising Expenditure in 1950s Britain', *Business History 52 (4): 651–65* 52, no. 4 (2010): 660.

60s as an example of moving towards a marketing approach where the brand understood and recruited young people specifically, but it was also a campaign that flew in the face of a heightened awareness of health issues.[18] Despite the government advocation of a laissez-faire approach to health care, leading to significant inequalities, and despite many politicians (including Thatcher) actively advising and lobbying for the tobacco industry, agreements were reached to reduce advertising. In 1971, an agreement was reached between HM government and the tobacco industry to introduce health warnings on packets of cigarettes. By 2002, the government had passed the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act, which was to ban all forms of tobacco advertising. During this time, marketing and advertising were supposed to comply with Advertising Standards Authority codes, which included not targeting youth; subsequent analysis of internal marketing material in 2000 shows that this code was largely ignored.[19]

The manner in which young people were affected by cigarette marketing, including the impact advertising restrictions, has been served well by the Centre for Tobacco Control Research (CfTR), at the University of Stirling, and by both Hilton and Tinkler's research. Much of the work at CfTR assessed first hand responses by young people to understand the degree to which they were influenced by marketing. Grant et al modelled the relationship between brand and smoking take-up, based on responses from almost a thousand adolescents, concluding that 'branding constructs such as *brand familiarity* and *brand image* more significantly predict future intention to smoke than peer influence alone'.[20] This is not necessarily borne out by the interviews in this study, although it could be argued that much of the brand image and familiarity was effectively delivered by the peer group, and other indirect influences.

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[18] O'Neill and Greenwood, '"Bringing You the Best"'.
[19] Hastings, Gerard and Lynn MacFayden, 'Keep Smiling: No One's Going to Die', University of Strathclyde, October 2000.
[20] Ian C. Grant et al., 'The Influence of Branding on Adolescent Smoking Behaviour: Exploring the Mediating Role of Image and Attitudes', *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing* 13, no. 3 (2008): 275–85. Original emphasis.

By reviewing the UK Government archives associated with the House of Commons Health Select Committee (HSC) on the Tobacco Industry and the Health Risks of Smoking, Devlin et al identified concerted and sophisticated methods of targeting young potential smokers; and Hastings and MacFadyen exposed a clear desire to increase consumption as well as market share, and a ruthless development of psychosocial messages targeted at the young.[21] This is explored further in chapter two, alongside a more detailed understanding of branding and marketing effectiveness from primary sources, and evidence of clear attempts by the marketing agencies to co-create cultural shifts.

Hilton considers smoking as a cultural and social phenomena in Britain, giving a detailed historical background, including significant focus on identity, from 1800 to 2000. Rationalising the continued take up of smoking by young people towards the end of the twentieth century, Hilton argues that the cultural championing of smoking through mass media was well able to counter state advice and education on health to younger people.[22] I will argue throughout this study that this mass media did not necessarily lean on the huge amounts of money spent on marketing, but more informal, indirect and subtle social messages.

Although Tinkler's monograph *Smoke Signals*, which considers visual representation of female smokers, ends its historical analysis in 1980, it serves as an excellent background to a number of later themes explored in this thesis, particularly smoking as performance and the strong bias away from female smokers in state health campaigns.[23] The feminine experience of smoking is

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[21] Elinor Devlin, Douglas Eadie, and Kathryn Angus, 'Tobacco Marketing and Young People' (University of Strathclyde, 2003).
Gerard Hastings and Lynn MacFadyen, 'A Day In The Life Of An Advertising Man: Review Of Internal Documents From The UK Tobacco Industry's Principal Advertising Agencies', *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 321, no. 7257 (2000): 366–71.
[22] Matthew Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800-2000: Perfect Pleasures* (Manchester University Press, 2000).
[23] Penny Tinkler, *Smoke Signals : Women, Smoking and Visual Culture in Britain /*, English ed., Leisure, Consumption, and Culture (Berg, 2006), UEA Library catalogue (Floor 3: Main shelves - Normal loan HV5746 TIN).

considered in chapter three of this document, and draws on Elliot and Jacobson's feminist writing, alongside Tinkler's, and is well illustrated by quotes from interviewees.[24]

Whilst there is clear evidence in later chapters that supports the theories of marketing, cultural championing, ineffectiveness of health campaigns and the use of cigarettes as stylistic accessories, the key question of whether cigarette marketing actually worked will also be explored. I will argue that Wilkie and Moore's fourth era, where fragmentation, philosophical assessment and knowledge-based segmentation begin to dominate marketing thought, is a practical paradigm. Where marketing of cigarettes to young people in Britain is considered, I will contend in chapter one that whilst marketing agencies may well have used the tools of Wilkie and Moore's fourth era, that they frequently missed their targets, largely due to the heightened awareness of their customers.

Let us turn now to the subject of youth and subcultures. Foremost in the near contemporary analysis of post war British subculture was the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Blackman describes part of CCCS's inspiration as being from Phil Cohen's rearticulation of Levi-Strauss's theory of myth 'into an explanation of how subcultures magically resolve social contradictions through multiple narratives of bricolage in the form of style, symbols and ritual'[25]. Cohen had linked movements in post-war youth culture to the disruption of working class life and the disturbance of community.[26] The CCCS group 'extended and built on Cohen's original terms of analysis, arguing that subcultural style could be understood as a 'magical' or 'ritualistic' expression of social experience'.[27] Style used music, clothes and behaviours to 'form a coherent symbolic expression of a subcultural group's way of

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[24] Rosemary Elliot, *Women and Smoking since 1890* (New York: Routledge, 2007);
Bobbie Jacobson, *Beating the Ladykillers: Women and Smoking* (London: Pluto, 1986).
[25] Shane Blackman, Youth Subcultural Theory: A Critical Engagement with the Concept, its Origins and Politics, from the Chicago School to Postmodernism, *Journal of Youth Studies*, 2005 8:1, 1-20. 9
[26] Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945*, Making Contemporary Britain (Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 69.
[27] Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945*, 72.

making sense of itself and its place in the world'.[28] CCCS analysed a variety of British youth subcultures, including teddy boys, mods, rockers, hippies and punks. Their subcultural theories represented a break with the American traditions of structural functionalism and deviance, preferring instead a neo-Marxian approach to class and power – subcultures, although not always in open conflict with the dominant culture were seen as a subset within a class structure, and subordinate to both the dominant and parent cultures.[29]

Hall et al identified five factors which underpinned the development of youth subcultures from the 1950s:

i) affluence (and by definition, consumerism),

ii) mass communication of entertainment, art & culture,

iii) post war acceptance of violence,

iv) education (and the societies that formed within educational establishments),

v) style (most notably in music and clothing).[30]

Each of these factors existed in the development of subcultures between 1975 and 2000. For affluence, the scene had already been set from the post war boom, and records and clothes in particular became affordable and available to young people. Although the 1980s was a time of youth unemployment, cheap imports of both of these commodities still allowed consumerism to flourish. And for those able to progress their individualism through getting rich quick, consumerism was rife and conspicuous – the yuppies of the 80's were a good example. Young people were growing up in larger towns and cities which were more multicultural than for the generation before them; so the nature and content of communication changed, as did the medium for mass communication. This grew not just through television – by 1975, 93% of

[28] Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945*, 72.
[29] Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (Routledge, 2006), 4–8.
[30] Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, 11–13.

homes had access to a television – but also through the boom years of music and magazines. Writing on the decline of skinhead culture in 1976, Long and Ward track the decline of football magazines against a significant increase in teenage and music magazines : 'the prime market for consumer capitalism was, and remains, popular music aimed at a mass base'.[31] Violence became acceptable and almost expected, in TV reporting of, for example, the miners' strike and football, and in the popular TV shows of the 70s and 80s in particular. A near-universal access to secondary and, increasingly, especially from the 1990s tertiary education, gave young people the opportunity to talk to each other in an informed way, aided by the advances in communication. Finally, style, inspired through peers, icons and communication devices, and delivered through the high street, mail order and a DIY approach, allowed young people to either follow a crowd or manage their own unique set of cultural references.

The factors are drawn out in later writings, for example, Osgerby, who connected the individualism and materialism of the 1980's directly to several subcultures. "New" travellers, left and right wing agitators and the black and white youths rioting at Brixton and Toxteth in 1981, and Tottenham in 1985 all had issues with the state hegemony, but were also enabled by mass communication and an acceptance of violence. Osgerby's link of the post-punk indie music scene to a long list of retro-inspired movements, placing styles of the 50's, 60's and 70's back into the present, would bring together factors of affluence, communication and educated knowledge of style in order for the young person to be confident in their look.[32] All of these themes will be evidenced practically in later chapters; style is the overriding theme in the story of why most people chose their brand of cigarette.

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[31] Geoff Mungham and Geoffrey Pearson, eds., *Working Class Youth Culture*, Routledge Direct Editions (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 113.
[32] https://museumofyouthculture.com/teen-intro-six/

Although there is little reference to cigarette smoking in the academic work on subcultures, later approaches taken by historians of youth to defining and describing groups can still be useful. Gildart's *Images of England Through Popular Music*, for example, traces some of the relationships between working class youth and 'rock 'n' roll' 'and rhythm and blues' music. Gildart maintains a view inherited from CCCS of a causal link between working class backgrounds and movements in popular music. Whilst it could be argued that this pre-dates a blurring of both class and subcultures, the reliance on a class base of young people to define a movement feels unnecessarily restrictive and in some cases, wrong – Gildart cites a number of artists who did not have working class backgrounds, along with others who effectively pushed away their roots as part of their creative process during their careers, whilst ignoring some key non-working class influencers. The assertion that dominant youth culture was effectively fully formed within a distinctive class is challenged by this study, whilst noting that Gildart considered a prior era (1955-1976). Whilst some cigarette brands certainly had identification at a class level, use within youth culture cut across boundaries in a spirit of rebellion, aspiration and playfulness - this will be illustrated in chapters three, four and five.

We should also consider subcultural boundaries at this point, as the blurring of lines between subcultures is not just a challenge to theory, but a key part of the findings in this study. The political and cultural landscape of the 1970s and 80s enabled diverse subcultural development, but allowed a blurring of the lines for young people to have proximity to subcultures beyond full membership. The relationships between subcultures and societies had changed as well – the closed groups of the skinheads, mods, rockers and teds may have had a distinct and aggressive image, consistent with a class based rejection of hegemony, but the real work was being done on the inside of the group, away from the eyes of society. Subcultural themes post 1975 had codes and rituals of their own, but these were much more visible; the focus was often to project onto others as much as into other group members. Further, the mass communication that had allowed subcultures a point of communication, and the open

accessibility to styles allowed young people to mix and match their alliances and looks. Not needing full membership of a group allowed people to stop short of some membership factors (including commitment). It was now possible to change allegiance and style on a weekly basis, inspired by peers and heroes, through whatever information channel was available. Cigarettes, as part of a performance, were a key accessory to the signaling that the outwardly facing styles required, and this is illustrated in chapter three and four of this study.

Whilst Cohen's work identified subcultures as addressing the contradictions of autonomy from and alignment to parental values, by the mid 1970s, the contradictions had shifted into joining or identifying separation from peer groups – this is illustrated multiple times in chapter five.[33] Hebdige describes subcultures as a 'noise interference in an orderly sequence…a blockage in the system of representation' before framing subcultures primarily through the lens of bricolage,[34] and the disruption of the 70s and 80s fitted this, but delivered beyond the fragmentation of groupings in the 50s and 60s. Just considering full membership misses a huge population, as Mungham and Pearson describe:

> Sub-cultural studies start by taking groups who are already card-carrying members of a particular sub-culture such as skinheads, bike boys or hippies, and working backwards to uncover their class location. The approach therefore excludes adolescents who share the same basic class location but who are not members of the sub-culture. As a result it tends to draw too tight a relation between class location and sub-cultural style and to underestimate the range of alternative responses.[35]

[33] Phil Cohen, 'Sub-Cultural Conflict and Working-Class Community: Working Papers in Cultural Studies 2', *Birmingham: CCCS, University of Birmingham*, 1972.
[34] Dick Hebdige *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, Routledge,1979), 90
[35] Mungham and Pearson, *Working Class Youth Culture*, 25.

This is echoed by Clarke in 1981 : 'On the whole, the absolute distinction between subcultures and "straights" is increasingly difficult to maintain: the current diversity of styles makes a mockery of subcultural analysis as it stands' and 'The concept of bricolage does not apply simply to an exclusive few - most working-class youths (and adults) combine elements of clothing to create new meanings.'[36] And by the mid 1970s there was also a clear eclectic approach to subcultural proximity in practice – it was possible (and encouraged) to borrow from a number of subcultural sources to create a style that defined membership of much smaller groups. Ironically, this was an extension of the bricolage approach that had served to define previous subcultures. So common were the proximities to subcultures that it would be difficult, by the mid-eighties, to find young people without at least an opinion of contemporary styles or music, reflected in their consumer choices – this would be considered 'normal' behaviour. And so the idea of ordinariness became consistent with migration of youth culture towards a far more individualistic sense of identity.[37]

McRobbie's feminist interpretation of ordinariness was defined by change and at a general, cross-cultural level. In 1978, with Garner, she considered girls to be on the margins of (male dominated), subcultures, with the exception of some mod or hippie groups, opting instead for manufactured and mainstream subcultures of fandom.[38] Later McRobbie proposed that 'young women in Britain have replaced youth as a metaphor for social change' and that 'young women across the boundaries of class and ethnicity had become detached from what once were their expected positions and destinations.'[39] This assessment went beyond sub-cultural groupings – by distancing herself from the masculine bias of subcultural studies, McRobbie focussed on

[36] Gary Clarke, 'Defending Ski-Jumpers: A Critique of Theories of Youth Sub-Cultures', in *CCCS Selected Working Papers* (Routledge, 2007).
[37] Bennett, Andy. "The post-subcultural turn: some reflections 10 years on." *Journal of Youth Studies* 14 (2011): 493 - 506.
[38] Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, 177.
[39] Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture*, (Bloomsbury Academic, 2023)

ordinary lives, and more subtle forms of rebellion. These are echoed below in chapters three and four - independent of gender, interviewees saw themselves as quietly rebelling within the guardrails of society and this was consistent with their own positions on the margins of subcultures.

Later consideration of subcultures focused on the groups more pertinent to our study period – punk, post-punk, new travellers, new romantics, soul boys and acid house ravers were all mentioned by interviewees. Bennet and Kahn-Harris explore much of this in positioning *After Subculture*; their view that 'subcultural divisions have broken down as the relationship between style, musical taste and identity has become progressively weaker and articulated more fluidly' is consistent with both the challenges to subcultural theory above and the empirical quotes from interviewees in the coming chapters.[40]

Worley's writings on new romantics and Oi!, ('which sought to integrate punk music with terrace culture in an amalgam of punks, skins and 'herberts' (…often proto football casuals))' are good examples of later subcultures forming in their own bricolage styles; and also have examples of movement in and out of groups which is supported in interviews in chapter five. [41]

Some interviewees had a very close affiliation with a subculture, whilst others moved in and out according to age, trend and other factors, something that in many cases was reflected by their choice of cigarette. But other interviews point outside subcultures for the overriding identifier in identity – the notion of 'coolness' is often repeated, and associates with cigarette smoking as a defining, rebellious, yet ordinary pastime. This supports the contention that the relevance of

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[40] Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris, *After Subculture : Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
[41] Matthew Worley, 'Past! Future! In Extreme!: Looking for Meaning in the "New Romantics," 1978–82', *Journal of British Studies*, 31 May 2024, 1–26, https://doi.org/10.1017/jbr.2024.57;
The Subcultures Network, *Fight Back: Punk, Politics and Resistance* (Oxford: Manchester University Press, 2015).

subcultural study is as importance through the lens of apparent ‘ordinariness’ as from within the subculture itself.

Having considered some historical context and some of the academic discussion around smoking, marketing, and youth culture, we can now consider the questions that this study asks, and how they are to be addressed. In starting out on the study, I expected the questions to be purely around brand affiliation and the conditions under which young people moved to and between and away from brands during their smoking careers. My expectation was that this would also give an insight into how the impact of marketing and cultural pressures impacted their choices. The study has addressed these questions, but it has also raised further questions: how did cigarette smoking impact the development of youth identity?; how effective was cigarette marketing to young people?; how relevant was subcultural theory to people who considered themselves ordinary and adjacent to, rather than embraced by, subculture?

This expansion of topics was primarily driven by the interviews with 24 volunteers between January and April 2024. Most interviewees were recruited through self-selection, primarily through social media postings. Interviews had a loose agenda in terms of prompted questions, but effectively worked as structured conversations, each of which lasted around 90 minutes, and many of which addressed the additional questions above. Questions on brand were prompted by a series of printed ad images, which were sourced from the History of Advertising Trust. Pseudonyms were given to all interviewees; these are the references in this document, along with year of birth, and are summarised in Appendix B.

Despite the relatively small sample size, the interviews provided a wealth of information which I have aimed to collate thematically, to give a structure to the study whilst addressing the key questions. The next chapter is an exploration of tobacco marketing with reference to consumer reaction, and in particular, branding, advertising, promotion and packaging. It also considers the impact of anti-smoking campaigns by both state and pressure groups. In doing so, it asks

whether and how tobacco marketing actually worked in practice and considers the longevity and relevance of brand values beyond marketing. It uses as a key source the parliamentary archives of material from Marketing Agencies, collated in 1999 as material to inform the Health Select Committee report on the Tobacco Industry. Chapter three concentrates on identity, whether that is based on individual perception, or that driven by group, nationalist, masculine, feminine or class identities. Chapter four considers cigarette smoking in the context of ordinariness and culture, with an emphasis on social and family structures, and considers the dichotomy of acceptability against rebellion, concluding that it is possible to be ordinary and rebellious at the same time. Chapter five uses interview material to illustrate the myriad of subcultural and other influences to cigarette smoking, bringing to life both Hebdige's description of bricolage and, through referencing identity and membership in the here and now, nodding to Raymond Williams' concept of emergent cultures. An overarching theme of this chapter is the relevance for young people of proximity to subcultures, rather than the necessity for full membership. Finally, chapter six aims to pull the threads of the study together, concluding that: a) the importance of marketing was often overrated and often missed its target, working against youth thinking or ironically repurposed, and often in opposition to cultural pressures b) notwithstanding, later marketing activity was able to co-create social groupings; c) smoking and brand was a key part to identity, so much so that it sometimes led the identity itself; d) brand cigarette smoking allowed movement within the adolescent identity dichotomy to allow young people to both fit in and demonstrate individualism; e) a redefinition of ordinariness in the 70s and 80s allowed for an element of adolescent rebellion together with a natural endorsement of extraordinary things contributing to the ordinary being; f) that smoking, in itself an ordinary pastime, still allowed movement within parameters for young people to develop individualism through brand choice within the dichotomic need to fit in; g) proximity to, or observation of a subculture could be as important as membership to young people, during a time when style could borrow from multiple sources; h) and cigarettes are a

good example of young people considering subcultural blending and consequent individual identity; i) equally, the divisions (including class) that define subcultural theory were often bridged through cigarette smoking both at a transactional and group level; and finally j) cessation of smoking often marked the transition away from subculture into dominant culture.

1. MARKETING

In many ways this brief is really a charity brief. Trying to help people recognise the error of their ways, thinking they are being cool smoking what Roy bloody Rogers smoked and opening their eyes to the unchallengeable truth that the coolest smoke in the world is a B&H. We want to see Great, British B&H in the Ben Sherman shirt pockets of Brit-popped, dance-crazed, Tequila drinking, Nike kicking, Fast Show watching, Loaded reading, Babe pulling, young gentlemen. [42]

People, what is going on out there? I look down this table, all I see are white flags. Our numbers are down all across the board. Teen smoking, our bread and butter, is falling like a shit from heaven! We don't sell Tictacs for Christ's sake. We sell cigarettes. And they're cool and available and addictive. The job is almost done for us![43]

This chapter will explore marketing theory in relation to cigarettes and a young audience between 1975 and 2000, with particular focus on brand and packaging, mixing theory and practice with the lived experience of interviewees, and will consider whether marketing ever worked to plan. By looking back from distance, it will also assess the degree to which brand values are able to have a long term hold, even, in many cases, after forty years of non-usage.

How did marketing agencies address complex landscape of younger smokers? Firstly, it's worth reminding ourselves of the 'size of the prize'. Then we can look at the 'marketing mix', and how it relates to our period and subject by looking at promotion and product. We will consider marketing effectiveness against a backdrop of state intervention, including the reaction of

[42] CDP Correspondence, 1999, quoted in Devlin, Eadie and Angus, "Tobacco Marketing", 6
[43] *Thank You for Smoking*, directed by Reitman, Jason (Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2005).

moving from advertising into sponsorship, then briefly review consumerism, before concluding the chapter by assessing the real relationship between cigarette marketing and young smokers.

Starting during Wilkie and Moore's third era, (where more scientific approaches were developed), a specific youth focus was spearheaded in the USA, focusing on images of independence, most notably through Phillip Morris's development of the Marlboro Man and the Virginia Slims brand. Other youth-centred campaigns were supported by targeted advertising, cartoon artwork (e.g. product placement in cartoons and Camel cigarette graphics), and candy cigarettes, produced with licensed packaging (these were available up until the 1980's in the US).[44] Clearly, there was a youth focus - in 1975, an RJ Reynolds marketing plan stated: 'They represent tomorrow's cigarette business. . . As this 14-24 age group matures, they will account for a key share of the total cigarette volume - for at least the next 25 years.'[45] RJ Reynolds had a clear view on the link between cigarette smoking and identity, addressing the challenges of adolescence:

Figure 6 - Candy cigarettes in the US (1970s) University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco and Society

> The fragile, developing self-image of the young person needs all the support and enhancement it can get. Smoking may appear to enhance that self-image in a variety of ways. If one values, for example, an adventurous, sophisticated, adult image, smoking may enhance ones self-image…This self-image enhancement effect has traditionally

[44] Richard W. Pollay, 'Targeting Tactics in Selling Smoke: Youthful Aspects of 20th Century Cigarette Advertising', *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 3, no. 1 (January 1995): 1–22,
[45] 'Rlnp0094 - 1975 Marketing Plans Presentation - Truth Tobacco Industry Documents', https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=rlnp0094.

been a strong promotional theme for cigarette brands and should continue to be emphasized.'[46]

Influenced heavily by the American approach, British tobacco companies developed marketing strategies directly to their own youth sector, but in a more subtle fashion, with less targeted adverts, instead developing brands to appeal to the young person who was keen to both fit in with something (class, family, subculture, social groups) and to develop individual identity.

Eugene McCarthy's 'Basic Marketing' guide was first published in 1960 and assimilated the principles of the 'Marketing Mix' into the '4Ps': Product (the item sold, including packaging); Place (how the item is distributed); Price (cost & profit) and Promotion (how the item's values are communicated). [47] The 4Ps have been commercially used extensively to define marketing strategy and are still in use, despite criticisms that they lack external focus and personalisation.[48] By the mid-1970s, the brand differentiators for cigarette marketing did not really include place (a wide range of cigarettes were displayed for sale through multiple and varied channels) nor price (although some cigarettes were considered expensive and aligned with sophistication, most were affordable) – this situation changed as taxes increased so that by the end of the century, all brands were much more expensive. So, in looking at marketing practices, we will concentrate on Promotion and Product. Promotion cannot be disentangled from Brand for cigarette marketing, as this is the key differentiator for all aspects of promotion. Product, for cigarette marketing is intrinsically linked with packaging – most of interviewees had strong memory and affiliation for packaging over other consumer led choices, such as taste.

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[46] 'Pkpg0045 - Research Planning Memorandum - Truth Tobacco Industry Documents', https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=pkpg0045.
[47] E. Jerome McCarthy and William D. Perreault Jr., *Basic Marketing : A Global-Managerial Approach*, 11th ed., The Irwin Series in Marketing (Irwin, 1993).
[48] Jim Blythe, *Principles & Practice of Marketing*, 3rd edition. (Sage, 2014).

Key to the British marketing strategies was brand development, with an understanding of the value of investment in early brand affinity.[49] There was a clear recognition of branding alignment to style:

> Many [are] smoking as an 'accoutrement to style' statement, the image style statement of their preferred brand was important to them.[50]

And there was better understanding of the idea that the cigarette (and its distinctive packaging) said something important about the smoker.[51] Therefore, brand identity became key – category groups developed: American; British; French; Low Tar and Menthol all had a group identity, and within categories specific brands held specific values. Some brands were considered to be 'clever' in their approach, and would be associated with a 'smarter' smoker:

> Thinking about it, [Silk Cut advertisements] were quite highbrow at first, they weren't as obvious as other brands. There's no people in them. It wasn't saying 'this type of person smokes Silk Cut', in the same way that a cowboy smoked Marlboro, or a pilot smokes Rothmans.[52]

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[49] 'Tobaccopapers.Com', accessed 3 December 2023, http://www.tobaccopapers.com/.
Rothmans (UK) Marketing Services Department "UK SMOKING HABITS SURVEY 1996/7," 1997
Note: 'As in previous years, younger adult smokers are the least loyal. In 1997, just 34% of young adult smokers would go elsewhere to buy their usual brand compared with 44% of all smokers...It may be because they have smoked for a shorter period of time and so have not become entrenched smokers of a particular brand. This is supported by the very high brand loyalty of Rothmans KS - a brand with an older smoker profile. It may also reflect their higher susceptibility to factors such as price and social currency in their choice of brand. This is supported by the fact that Marlboro Lights, one of the leading fashion brands among the young adult smokers, has a loyalty level of 37%.'

[50] Devlin et al., 'Tobacco Marketing and Young People'. – quoting Colquhoun Associates Debrief Presentation, 1996

[51] Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance, *Abuse of the Pack to Promote Cigarettes in the Region*, 2010; Koten J. "Tobacco marketers" success formula: make cigarettes in smoker's own image". *Wall Street Journal.* p. 22. February 29, 1980.
Note 'A cigarette package is unique because the consumer carries it around with him all day... it's part of a smoker's clothing, and when he saunters into a bar and plunks it down, he makes a statement about himself'

[52] Roxy (1968), 7.

> There were so many adverts at that time, subliminally using images to make the name more memorable. Silk Cut smokers were slightly smarter than Marlboro smokers... And a really great sounding name, because Silk Cut, it's sound-wise, it's snappy and works.[53]

Other brands might have aspirational associations, although these did not always land with a younger audience:

> I think even as a youngster, I think I found this one [a Rothmans print ad showing a pilot uniform, a sports car and a helicopter] a bit annoying because I read a lot of George Orwell when I was very, very young. And I just didn't buy into this aspirational thing at all. What the advertisers are trying to do there is so blatant that I think even as a youngster I would have found it a bit annoying really. Although I always knew that Rothmans were very good quality cigarettes and would be happy enough to smoke them, but probably I didn't smoke them over the years, and it may well be because I didn't really like that advert. It's giving me so many messages that were complete anathema to what I was interested in throughout my formative years.[54]

There could even be a psychological pride in connection with 'getting' an advert:

> I lived in Ladbroke Grove for a few years, and I had a billboard right outside my bedroom window that always had either a B&H or a Silk Cut ad. They were doing this clever thing with the red stripe. A lot of the ads were about that, the red thing with the plastic wrap on the wrapper. I always thought that was clever because it was really that idea of the anticipation of pulling off the thing and the way the red strip used to come off around the gold pack was all trying to penetrate deep into your psyche. By then I was a B&H smoker,

[53] Tom (1962), 5.
[54] Steve (1961), 8.

> so I thought, ridiculously, I was proud of the fact that they had cool ads. And clever ads. Cool, clever people.[55]

Shifts in marketing, resulting in changes in branding, packaging and advertising models have been examined in a number of papers considering their effectiveness. Hammond and Parkinson's 2009 study in Canada considered the risk perception of cigarette packaging with specific properties of health-related wording and colour, concluding that these terms and colours were as misleading and effective as ever.[56] Hammond, Daniel and White subsequently studied a sample of 947 young females in the UK who were asked to view female and non-female branded and non-branded packs, concluding that young women 'were significantly less likely to accept a pack when offered only plain versus branded female pack' and that pack branding 'remains a potent tool for increasing the appeal of tobacco products to young women.'[57]

Although these studies consider marketing effectiveness post-2000, they are still pertinent to this study in terms of the principles of brand awareness and affinity, not least as they are able to isolate particular aspects of marketing, in the absence of other mix components.

Interviewees told stories of brands that were associated with particular male and female marketing, including the young sectors within genders – these are explored further in chapter three. Many interviewees had a clear perspective on the shift in the 1970s and 1980s to advertise 'healthy' or low tar cigarettes. These were by their nature a different sort of campaign – carry on smoking but do yourself less harm by taking in less tar. In reality this was an even

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[55] Will (1966), 5.
[56] David Hammond and Carla Parkinson, 'The Impact of Cigarette Package Design on Perceptions of Risk', *Journal of Public Health* 31, no. 3 (1 September 2009): 345–53.
[57] David Hammond, Samantha Daniel, and Christine M. White, 'The Effect of Cigarette Branding and Plain Packaging on Female Youth in the United Kingdom', *Journal of Adolescent Health* 52, no. 2 (1 February 2013): 151–57.

more nefarious message – low tar smokers ended up smoking more cigarettes, and even countering the ventilation that was designed to reduce the intake of tar into the lungs:

> So you could put tape around it, which I've done before as well, which of course is ok until you get down to the bit with the tape on. That's not particularly nice when that starts burning![58]

> By the time I was working and could afford it, I graduated to the purple Silk Cut, which were, you know, the lowest tar. But I was smoking 40 a day. So it was crazy. It was a crazy self-denial.[59]

An innovative approach to marketing was launched by Silk Cut in 1979 – the 'Silk Cut Two Week Challenge' encouraged smokers to switch to Silk Cut for two weeks, to convince themselves to become low tar smokers. No incentives, no money off, just the satisfaction of changing brands, and (apparently) moving to a healthier lifestyle. It was phenomenally successful:

> I moved back into a house, and everyone in that house smoked Marlboros, then, almost overnight, we all decided we were going to smoke Silk Cut. Entirely down to the advertising. There was a slight nod to the health benefits, in that if we could still taste it, why not go to a low tar cigarette; we'd tried some of the low tar cigarettes and it felt like you had to smoke twice as hard to get anything out of them.[60]

Meanwhile, cigarette manufacturers were driving research into what chemicals could drive addiction - ammonia was discovered as a freebasing additive in Marlboro cigarettes.[61] And in 1996, the American Cancer Society study concluded that lung cancer was more likely amongst

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[58] Dave (1962), 3.
[59] Grace (1953), 3.
[60] Adam (1961), 3.
[61] Terrell Stevenson and Robert N. Proctor, 'The SECRET and SOUL of Marlboro', *American Journal of Public Health* 98, no. 7 (July 2008): 1184–94.

lower tar smokers, due to deeper draws, allowing carcinogens to travel deeper into smokers' lungs.[62] In 2003, Phillip Morris, in the face of lawsuit threats, produced a series of adverts agreeing that there were no health benefits to a lower tar cigarette: 'You should not assume that lower tar cigarettes are less harmful or that smoking this kind of cigarette will help you quit.'[63]

The significant investment in branding was aimed at creation of brand loyalty; once achieved, smokers could be very reluctant to change brands:

> I can remember experimenting with lots of different brands, as you do. And I can remember deciding my brand was Winston. Only briefly, but I was going to be a Winston smoker. And I can remember, at about 13 or 14, going into Gauloises for a bit. So that's a bit about image, I guess. But before long, by the time I was 14, it was always Bensons.[64]

For Roxy, still smoking today, there's a consumer issue with her particular brand loyalty:

> Now, if I go and buy cigarettes and they don't have my brand, I don't know what else to ask for. I don't know what a suitable alternative is, I haven't smoked anything else for so long; I don't like B&H and I don't like Marlboro, and nowadays, if you're in a shop buying cigarettes, you can't see anything. And they can't suggest anything either.[65]

In a number of interviews, the development of identity goes hand in hand with the choice of brand; there is an association with brand that may alter as identity changes:

> I was also looking for the cigarette that I would stay with, that would be my cigarette. My father smoked Rothmans, he wouldn't smoke anything else, and my mother smoked Dunhill. And she wouldn't smoke anything else. And I think in my mind, maybe not

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[62] Conspiracy Theories, 'Tobacco Industry Cover Up', https://open.spotify.com/episode/1sw8VLLEe1ls7n5CmtFZPM.
[63] Claire Cozens, '"Lights" Just as Bad, Says Marlboro Firm', *The Guardian*, 13 October 2003, sec. Media.
[64] 'Will (1966)', 2.
[65] 'Roxy (1968)', 2.

> consciously, I was looking for the cigarette that I wanted to be my cigarette, and actually I found it with Pall Malls.[66]
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> I was a loyal B&H smoker at that point by 17 or 18 when I was smoking every day. They were the first cigarettes I settled on. I always came back to B&H. I had dalliances with various other cigarettes, usually on the basis of thinking them cooler than B&H. And obviously there were some cigarettes that do just mark you out as a wanker…They were the classless generic cigarette. They were King Size. So you got more fag than you did with a Number Six. I suppose a gold packet. They were sharp without being flashy in terms of their packaging.[67]

Although the marketing agencies would claim that they were aiming advertising away from younger smokers and specifically to encourage brand switching amongst older smokers, the reality was that these were a lost cause; brand loyalty had been established:

> Embassy and Players - they'd already got their niche, they didn't really need to advertise because people of my parents' age and my friend's parents' age - they had their brands and they stuck to them. No, they never changed their brands.[68]

Brand awareness and loyalty in cigarette marketing had an ideal practical delivery mechanism – for other products, specific product design would be key, but in a market where all cigarettes looked similar, the differentiator was the packaging. Nickels & Jolson deemed packaging so important that they called it the 'fifth 'P' in the marketing mix, identifying brand elements that could very effectively deliver enhanced product perceptions and differentiation.[69] At a 1994 Philip Morris conference, marketing executive Mark Hulit's speech gives us an insight: 'In the

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[66] Oscar (1960), 3.
[67] Zach (1958), 3.
[68] Frank (1960), 4.
[69] William G. Nickels and Marvin A. Jolson, 'Packaging - the Fifth "p" in the Marketing Mix?', *Advanced Management Journal (03621863)* 41, no. 1 (Winter 1976): 13,

absence of any other Marketing messages, our packaging...our trademark, our design, color and information - is the sole communicator of our brand essence. Put another way -- when you don't have anything else -- our packaging is our Marketing.'[70]

Wakefield considered industry documentation from the 1950s through to the mid 1990s, identifying sophisticated research methods that endorsed colour associations, and brand/packaging design targeted at young and female smokers.[71] Further understanding of the importance of branded packaging can be evidenced in studies considering the impact of enforced moves to plain packaging. Stead et al considered 25 quantitative studies, evidencing branded factors of attractiveness, perceived quality and taste, and smoker identity.[72]

Packaging was key to the positive brand memories of many of the interviewees, with an appreciation of style:

> With Lambert and Butler it was an aesthetic thing. I really liked the pack, because it was silver and black, very simple. The Rothmans look like slightly more old-fashioned cigarettes. But the Lambert and Butler came in around the art school time, because aesthetically it was pleasing.[73]

> With Gitanes, I didn't smoke them because it looked glamorous. I smoked it for the taste and the pack. I thought the pack looked great. I was with a friend in London in '82 who was going to the Batcave, and I'd hardly smoked at all then. And he smoked Gitanes. And

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[70] 'Qsbd0116 - MARKETING ISSUES CORPORATE AFFAIRS CONFERENCE 9... - Truth Tobacco Industry Documents', https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=qsbd0116.
[71] M Wakefield et al., 'The Cigarette Pack as Image: New Evidence from Tobacco Industry Documents', *Tobacco Control* 11, no. Supplement 1 (1 March 2002): p73–80.
Note: Standard colours: blue=mild; green=fresh; red=strength/power; white=health; gold/silver=sophistication – see the standard 'Color Wheel of Branding and Packaging', referenced in Kotler, Keller, Marketing Management, 2016, p413
[72] Martine Stead et al., 'Is Consumer Response to Plain/Standardised Tobacco Packaging Consistent with Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Guidelines? A Systematic Review of Quantitative Studies', *PLOS ONE* 8, no. 10 (2013): e75919.
[73] 'Adam (1961)', 5.

> I had my first one. I loved them. And he smoked them because of the design angle of the packet. So I guess I got onto them for that reason really.[74]

Figure 7 - Gitanes packaging (1999)
Science Museum Group

And so the packaged product became the brand, and in the case of many cigarette brands, the badge. Wakefield quotes a 1980 *Wall Street Journal* article in which a cigarette packet designer states: 'A cigarette package is unique because the consumer carries it around with him all day . . .it's a part of a smoker's clothing, and when he saunters into a bar and plunks it down, he makes a statement about himself.'[75]

The smoker's identity is examined further in Borland et al:

> Most smokers carry a pack with them at all times, often leaving it sitting on surfaces near where they are smoking (e.g., on café tables). They also need to take out their pack, thus displaying it, each time they smoke. This creates the context for the pack to be an important communication tool: that the person is a smoker and through the association with the brand, something about the kind of person they are.[76]

Marketeers in the UK were also wise to both the power of the badge: '…smokers of B&H, when they put their pack on the pub table, will always have it noticed by their friends. It is their badge and all we are trying to do is celebrate it.'[77] And its symbolism: '…mid/down market new smokers, infrequent and lapsed B&H smokers…Smoking for these people is still a badge. A sign

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[74] Nathan (1959), 2.
[75] Wakefield et al., 'The Cigarette Pack as Image', 73.
[76] Ron Borland et al., 'The Impact of Structural Packaging Design on Young Adult Smokers' Perceptions of Tobacco Products', Research Paper, *Tobacco Control* 22, no. 2 (2013): 97–102.
[77] *B&H Brief* (HM Government archive, 1997).

of maturity, discernment and independence. A statement about their outlook on life.'[78] Moreover, marketeers saw a badge as linked to status: 'That gold (B&H) pack used to be the thing to be seen with: the pack to throw onto the table as a challenge to any cheapskate who dared smoke a lesser brand.'[79]

Interviewees directly associated their experiences with badge marketing. In early days, smoking itself fitted the category:

> I think it was also a badge. If there were bullies at school for example, I remember I'm going back to when I was like 14 or 15, you could placate a bully by offering him a cigarette. It's a genuine way out of being bullied and you could become quite friendly with him by offering a cigarette. And he might take the whole packet but he would probably not hit you.[80]

> None of us had much money, but if you smoked cigarettes, it meant that you were a little more affluent. It wasn't about being flash with wealth, it was more about being cool – if you put a pouch of tobacco on the table, it meant that you were struggling. It wasn't about being flash, it was more that we didn't want people to think that we didn't have any money.[81]

As smokers grew older, so the badges became a more sophisticated description of personal or group brand, and often with a very clear badge messaging:

> If I saw someone particularly in the mid 70s up to 77, 78, smoking Sovereign, I would think you're probably from the local council estate... I was definitely judgmental. For instance, I would not have expected to see a Marlboro smoker...with nicotine all over

[78] *Gallagher Creative Brief* (HM Government archive, 1995).
[79] *Gallagher Creative Brief*.
[80] 'Oscar (1960)', 4.
[81] Harry (1975), 3.

their fingers. Although they were just as likely to as a Sovereign smoker. There was definitely that 'We're smoking Sovereign because it's all we can afford'.[82]

This was an extension of your brand. If you have cheap fags, if you have Lambert and Butlers, in your head, you'd be a cheapskate, and then when you're going out, you put your best shirt on, your best shoes on, you'd have a shave. You'd make an effort and you get the good fags as well. And while you're out, you'd have the good beer, maybe Kronenberg, you'd have a Kronenberg glass and your Benson fags - how cool am I?[83]

Is it about the packaging? Absolutely. And of yourself as well. I guess you would say it was kind of completing the brand.[84]

Just as the badges in the 70's and 80's came on and off your jacket according to who or what was in vogue, so the badges of cigarette brands went on and off:

(St Moritz) would have been a very short lived badge. It would just be look, we've got we've got some. A big box with an international length as well. Look, we've got some really long fags and they're menthol and they're in a really nice box. And they've got a fancy French name.[85]

What some people would do is deliberately smoke a brand that nobody else smoked because that's almost a conversation point that gets you noticed. So if you were in the pub and somebody came and put down a packet of Rothmans or a packet of Lambert and Butler, you'd think, why do they smoke them? Because the brand you smoke...it's something that almost becomes part of your persona. And that would pique your

[82] 'Frank (1960)', 6.
[83] Ian (1972), 4.
[84] Michael (1959), 3.
[85] Victor (1965), 6.

> interest in someone if they were to put down a brand that you weren't familiar with or a brand that generally wasn't favoured by your social demographic.[86]

Brands and, by extension, the badges that smokers wore, were important to identity. This was relevant not only at brand level but also the category of the brand. Chapter three explores brand categories with respect to identity. At this point it is worth considering appendix A - an example of marketing beyond brand and into cultural style.

Having assessed the direction of the marketing mix, we can now turn to effectiveness in the face of state intervention and a target audience that often considered itself wise to the direct approaches of marketeers.

The effectiveness of cigarette advertising has been considered, for example in High (1999), who reviewed a number of studies and reports that considered a causal link between advertising and increased smoking consumption. High argued that most or all of the studies were flawed in their approach, concluding that there was no empirical proof of an increase in the market or an incentive for younger people to start smoking as a result of advertising.[87] High's position as a consultant to the South African tobacco industry in the 1990's lessens the credibility of his conclusion, and the fact that the message came from a neoliberal free market funding think tank that enjoyed funding from the tobacco industry is instructive. The economics of tobacco consumption are key to the argument - Kinman and Vinten in 1995 stated that smokers contributed £31 billion a year to the UK economy, but came to a very different conclusion:

> The arguments of the tobacco industry that advertising does not attract new smokers but only encourages brand switching may have some credence, although the blatant

[86] Bob (1969), 10.
[87] Hugh High, *Does Advertising Increase Smoking? Economics, Free Speech and Advertising Bans*, Occasional Paper / Institute of Economic Affairs 107 (Inst. of Economic Affairs, 1999).

> targeting of young smokers in less controlled markets limits any credibility the industry may claim.[88]

The critical question thus becomes not 'did marketing work', but 'where did it work, and where did it fail'? To illustrate the split, we can consider the tobacco companies' public position on marketing:

- advertising only acts to redistribute market share and not to increase demand,
- advertising is never directed at children
- advertising 'information' promotes conversion to safer brands[89]

And research against these stated aims was stronger than the generic 'does advertising impact cigarette consumption?' question - in the US, Tye et al concluded that:

> The evidence supports the hypothesis that cigarette advertising and promotion increase and sustain cigarette consumption. If brand share were the only function of advertising and promotion, as the cigarette manufacturers insist, the industry would lobby vigorously for an ad ban.[90]

Ironically, Stewart's study of OECD countries with full or partial bans in 1993, proved statistically that advertising bans did not reduce smoking, in fact there was a case to suggest they increased it – he posited that this might have been because people were no longer exposed to health warnings.[91]

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[88] Bernard Frank Kinman and Gerald Vinten, 'Tobacco: Policing and Social Policy', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 15, no. 4/5 (1995): 107.
[89] Simon Chapman, *Great Expectorations: Advertising and the Tobacco Industry*, Comedia Series, no. 35 (Comedia Pub. Group, 1986).
[90] Joe B. Tye, Kenneth E. Warner, and Stanton A. Glantz, 'Tobacco Advertising and Consumption: Evidence of a Causal Relationship', *Journal of Public Health Policy* 8, no. 4 (1 December 1987): 492–508.
[91] Michael J. Stewart, 'The Effect on Tobacco Consumption of Advertising Bans in OECD Countries', *International Journal of Advertising* 12, no. 2 (1 January 1993): 155–80.

Moreover, the evidence to support advertising directed at young people was overwhelming. Although the following quote was from RJ Reynolds in the US, it was echoed in the UK, not least because of the US/UK links made by the British American Tobacco conglomeration (BAT):

> Evidence is now available to indicate that the 14-to-18- year-old group is an increasing segment of the smoking population. RJR-T must soon establish a successful new brand in this market if our position in the industry is to be maintained over the long term.[92]

Specifically, there is evidence that marketing agencies began to see themselves as co-creators of what was on trend for British youth. A good example is the B&H creative briefs in the 90s which aligned brand values with the anti-American 'Cool Britannia' theme of the time.[93] Collett Dickenson Pearce (CDP) had been responsible for surreal and groundbreaking B&H advertising of the late 1970's; their campaigns for 1997 were far less subtle, and necessitated an understanding and a cooperation with cultural and social pressures in order to work:[94]

> We want more 18-34 year old blokes smoking B&H than ever before. We want to see these dudes ripping-up packets of Marlboro and Camel and treating them with the disdain that second rate, American filth deserves. For Christ's sake what the hell are people doing smoking brands that are made to be smoked by 'cowhands' and not by the youth of the trendiest, coolest, most happening country in the world. In many ways this brief is really a charity brief. Trying to help people recognise the error of their ways, thinking they are being cool smoking what Roy bloody Rogers smoked and opening their eyes to the unchallengeable truth that the coolest smoke in the world is a B&H. We want

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[92] 'Tobacco Company Quotes on Marketing to Kids', 1976, www.tobaccofreekids.org;
Claude Teague draft report, "Planning Assumptions and Forecast for the Period 1977-1986 for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company." Bates No. 502819513-9532
[93] Letter to Gallaher UK from CDP, June 23 1997
http://www.tobaccopapers.com/PDFs/0200-0299/0231.pdf
[94] Devlin, Eadie, and Angus, 'Tobacco Marketing and Young People', 6

> to see Great, British B&H in the Ben Sherman shirt pockets of Brit-popped, dance-crazed, Tequila drinking, Nike kicking, Fast Show watching, Loaded reading, Babe pulling, young gentlemen. [95]

Whatever the moral stance this socially driven marketing might have, it's clear that for some consumers, it worked, by seizing what they considered the nationalistic zeitgeist, albeit with a strong masculine bias. Steve's feedback was typical: 'I was a young British man and I was smoking Benson and Hedges at that time. It was quite suitable and appropriate. It was part of me. The brand felt right.'[96]

Tobacco companies were not divorced from the actions of the marketing agencies - the B&H creative briefs from Gallager aligned brand values with the anti-American 'Cool Britannia' theme of the time:

> American brands can be `Cool' to a degree that most British brands can't be...British Coolness is a very different animal . It is either the increasingly marginalised coolness of `High Society' or the more aggressive coolness of the 'street brands' - Ben Sherman shirts, Doc Martens. Benson & Hedges probably started life in High Society coolness but has over the years moved into the area of `street brands'. If there was to be a B&H American Blend brand to take on Marlboro Lights, it would be important to access this element of British coolness.[97]

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[95] CDP Correspondence, 1999, quoted in Devlin, Eadie and Angus, "Tobacco Marketing", 6
[96] 'Steve (1961)', 7.
[97] Marketing letter to Gallager UK, June 23 1997, from HSC files held in The Centre for Tobacco Research http://www.tobaccopapers.com/PDFs/0200-0299/0231.pdf

The tobacco companies may have wanted to develop a knowing affiliation with their customers, but that would require cooperation on both sides, and the target audience was often cynical to marketing practices:

> We were very conscious of advertising and representation and imagery. And if you were coming at it from a critical political perspective, we would have rejected anything that was gendered; anything sophisticated was not something that we identified with. That's what older advertising execs were using to sell to older people. We were separate to that. There was a real sense of us being a generation where that didn't apply. There was just an immediate rejection of those kinds of old-fashioned gendered ideas, and much maybe a start of that fluidity that is still playing its way out here, which is challenging binaries.[98]

Many of the interviewees amplified this sense of cynicism and challenge to brand marketing, meaning that non-targeted advertising in particular backfired:

> If I recall, say, a Rothmans advert which has got the picture of the pilot's tunic with the Rothmans cigarette, whilst I don't know how much I'm influenced by advertising in the general sense, I never really bought into that sophistication side of it. I didn't consciously want to be seen as sophisticated, while I was smoking.[99]

> I did like Marlboro. I liked the fact they were American [but] I thought the cowboy advertising was wanky.[100]

> As a younger person studying graphic design, we were far too clever to be fooled by branding. These were all conscious choices. We weren't being manipulated by the

[98] 'Alison (1969)', 8.
[99] 'Steve (1961)', 6.
[100] 'Zach (1958)', 4.

> advertising industry; we knew what advertising was. We studied it...so there was a lot of judgement about these kinds of brands which didn't have an identity like Marlboro, which somehow just had always existed and wasn't trying too hard. Maybe because they were avowedly American, they were disconnected enough for us not to make any judgements.[101]

Adam saw a link between the effectiveness of the subtle cigarette campaigns, and the lessons learnt by the anti-smoking marketing:

> The B&H campaign was massive awareness. Everyone knew it - even people who didn't smoke knew that they were Benson and Hedges adverts. But it didn't change anyone's brand loyalty as far as I could see. And actually, I think it had the reverse effect - maybe someone in the government saw it as a way of introducing anti-smoking adverts that were cleverer than just someone saying you've got to stop smoking. I distinctly remember seeing an advert from the health service of a gravestone looking like a packet of cigarettes with 'smoking will kill you'. The awareness was there. I don't think it worked in terms of moving people to that brand because if you didn't like Benson and Hedges cigarettes anyway, you wouldn't consider moving, and it gave a way in to creative people to start working against the smoking lobby. Because I think those people stole a lot of ideas from the abstract advertising to say we can come at this from a slightly oblique angle and persuade people better than just hammering home big signs on the side of cigarette packs.[102]

Anti-smoking campaigns clearly drew on both the direct and more subtle messaging that the tobacco companies were using. This happened over time; health warning labels on packets

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[101] 'Alison (1969)', 11.
[102] 'Adam (1961)', 11.

were introduced in 1971 and a complete ban on print advertising was effective from 1995, so marketing agencies turned increasingly to sponsorship. Aitken et al considered the understanding of cigarette brand sponsorship amongst children aged 6-17 in Glasgow in 1986. They concluded that, in contravention of advertising standards of practice and their own external positioning, that tobacco company advertising through sponsorship had a direct appeal to the young and, through sponsorship of major sports (eg motor-racing), that the tobacco companies had effectively circumvented the laws on cigarette advertising on TV. Further, that the links between brand and excitement (through sports) were made readily by young children who were not yet conscious of the nature of commercial sponsorship.[103]

Our interviewees saw a direct link between motor racing and the glamourous smoking association, sometimes through the stars of the sport, rather than the direct advertising:

> You associate Formula One with the whole glamour thing like models and James Hunt. And the paddock. That has a life on the edge type thing about it and all the glamour that goes along with it and the riches and the sense of speed and danger. [104]

And for Harry, the connection was closer to home, and, by association, effective:

> I grew up in Mulbarton, and JPS were very big there, because of the Lotus connection. And we used to see the lorries go past, but it was just one of those things where you think 'I like fast cars, and I like that branding', but I don't think as a pre-teen that I necessarily associated that with smoking. But it probably made smoking feel a bit cooler to me.[105]

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[103] P.P. Aitken, D.S. Leathar, and S.I. Squair, 'Children's Awareness of Cigarette Brand Sponsorship of Sports and Games in the UK', *Health Education Research* 1, no. 3 (1 September 1986): 203–11.
[104] Eddie (1970), 8.
[105] 'Harry (1975)', 1.

Although the sponsorship was quite billed as brand awareness by the marketing agencies, it did subtly help to shift allegiance to brands:

> There was forty over Sunday cricket, because these things were so much part of the furniture in the 70s…I hardly thought of it as being connected with cigarettes at all. But I was interested in the cricket and even though I wasn't consciously thinking about it, I did end up smoking the cigarettes quite a lot. So who am I to say that I wasn't influenced by the adverts, or the sponsorship?[106]

Billboard marketing would typically be less subtle than sponsorship, but for cigarettes was pitched as brand awareness, For Harry, it was remembered as a particular memory of growing up:

> Silk Cut I remember from the hoardings advertising…we'd go down Barn Road, next to the lumber merchants and the ad would be there – a piece of silk with two cuts in it, and then all the variations on saying Silk Cut. And it worked, probably more than any other similar advertising.[107]

The movement towards more subtle advertising was driven by the limits on where marketing could take place, but also by the importance of brand, both because it became the appeal itself, but also as it was beginning to be the only thing that could be placed on the marketing material. This is an important context for the consideration of tobacco control. Beard et al considered trends between 1976 and 2016, concluding that tobacco control could be directly linked to both reduced uptake and increased cessation.[108] This was despite the reality that tobacco company push back against the anti-smoking lobby was undoubtedly helped by their

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[106] 'Steve (1961)', 9.
[107] 'Harry (1975)', 4.
[108] Emma Victoria Beard et al., ''S'-Shaped Curve: Modelling Trends in Smoking Prevalence, Uptake and Cessation in Great Britain from 1973 to 2016', Smoking, *Thorax* 74, no. 9 (2019): 875–81.

influence on government policy, at the highest levels of power, as evidenced by the analysis of the Legacy Tobacco Documents Library by Petticrew and Krishnaratne in 2004.[109] What state pressure there was needed to coexist with big spending marketing campaigns, and alongside a young audience embracing smoking as a point of rebellion or identify development:

> There were things like the public information films... that Nick O'Teen superhero - that's not going to influence children. That's just like stupid. Then you'd have programmes like Grange Hill and Byker Grove where you'd have a kid who was a bit of a wrong 'un and he smoked, and in Grange Hill this one time he fancied this girl for ages, and just as they were about to kiss she goes 'Oh no, I can't kiss you, you smell of smoke'. And that's like a subliminal sort of message that smoking is bad, but I was never gonna pull the prettiest girl in school anyway. So she was out of my league when I smoked, so it didn't matter.[110]

Figure 8 - Health Education Council campaign (1990)
Propaganda Posters

Finally, we should consider the marketing of cigarettes as consumer products, amongst the young in particular. Thomas Frank challenges the perception that counterculture in America acted against conformity and consumption, arguing that marketing strategies aligned with the movements of cultural change, to the extent that both became dominated by immediate

[109] M. Petticrew and S. Krishnaratne, 'The Fag Lady, Revisited : Margaret Thatcher's Efforts on Behalf of the Tobacco Industry', *Public Health* 128, no. 10 (2014): 904–10.
[110] Kurt (1969),6.

gratification and constant consumer fashion shifts.[111] And for all of the challenges that interviewees might put against the marketing of specific brands, they were still recalling a time when they were buying branded cigarettes. Some marketing strategies exploited this dynamism by encouraging a fashionable consumption, very much in line with Frank's perspective - there is evidence of this in future chapters, which will compare the influence of subculture against that of consumerism, during a time of challenge in the UK similar to that in the late 1960's of Frank's analysis.[112]

What conclusions can we draw about this understanding of marketing practices, using the echo of remembered impact? The third era of marketing thought, using Wilkie and Moores' model, had developed from the 1950s – data was now available to set strategy; agencies had a clearer view of consumer behaviour and brand segmentation was emerging. But the disruption caused by the health reports of the 1960s together with societal and state pressures against smoking meant that the transition to the fourth era of fragmentation, philosophical assessment and knowledge-based segmentation was disrupted. Marketeers were aware of these challenges, of course, but didn't necessarily take a consistent line to addressing them. Thus, some marketing took a broad brush to a perception of aspiration (B&H) or freedom (Marlboro); others tried to tackle health issues head on (Silk Cut) before refining their offer for the 'clever' smoker. Campaigns could be localised by issuing free cigarettes at nightclubs, or globalised, through huge sponsorship deals, either to promote the fast macho style of Formula One, or more for general awareness – cricket, snooker or sailing, all of which offered a route into a nationalistic link. State interventions complicated matters further, by limiting advertising and sponsorship. A further complication in understanding the marketing/consumer relationship was the behaviours of the young consumers themselves – wise to health issues, but still at a point

[111] Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool : Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (University of Chicago Press, 1997)
[112] Frank, *The Conquest of Cool : Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism /.*

where cool was an overriding concern, and the influences and attractions in their lives were unlikely to be served by marketing budgets - their behaviour was sometimes the opposite of what a brand marketeer might have intended. Some interviewees spoke of smoking a brand 'ironically', to challenge class perceptions; others smoked the strongest cigarette available because it was the most rebellious thing to do. Thus, marketing practices were inconsistent, brand identities developed at different velocities, for different reasons, and the influences on brand success and brand awareness would not always align purely to marketing budget or sophisticated targeting. Undoubtedly marketing missed their targets amongst the young as often as they hit, but in an environment where most young people would at least try smoking, a more general messaging may have felt justified, particularly as it could be defended as promoting brand switching rather than encouraging young people to increase the smoking population. And, forty years on, the brand values, intended or not, were remembered clearly and vividly. Perhaps the most nefarious practices of all were reserved for the last part of the century, when, in line with Frank's perspectives, marketeers outwardly aimed to co-create the culture, aligning brand coolness and consumption with endorsement directly aligned with cultural change.

2. SMOKING, NATIONAL IMAGINARIES AND INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY

The glamour's been taken away from the whole thing, and packets don't look good at all. Now, that's what (the government) wanted to do, and they've done it, good for them. There's no glamour now and I look at people smoking and they look desperate, they don't look particularly happy. It just doesn't look cool anymore.[113]

Identity in young people is effectively a key theme for this thesis. I have discussed how badge marketing aligned to identity in chapter two, and we will see how ordinariness formed an important a part of young people's identities in chapter four, and the need to align with a different, often sub-cultural identity in chapter five. And this and further chapters will illustrate the key dichotomy of identity in adolescence – the need to generate a personal identity that 'fits in' alongside one that expresses individualism. Chapter four considers popular individualism working alongside ordinariness as an illustration of this dichotomy. The mid 1970s created a social environment where this balance became possible; I will explore the soft rebellion and an eclectic approach to style in chapter five that allowed young people to develop an individual identity within the parameters of groups or subcultures, together with the softening of subcultural membership requirements, allowing multiple influences to form unique styles. The realisation of a world where the extraordinary became the ordinary is a further overarching theme of this study, and this is illustrated by looking at both individual and group identity.

This chapter will explore the creation and maintenance of identity through the lens of cigarette smoking, primarily expanding on the thoughts of brand badging. Initially it will explore the

[113] 'Nathan (1959)', 6.

relevance of ‘coolness’ through interviewee thoughts on individual and group identity. After considering some of the relevant literature, it will then address a nationalist theme of Britishness, then imagined national themes of Americanness and Frenchness. It will then consider masculinity and femininity in smoking, then consider the identity of the low tar and menthol smoker, before summarising the key findings of identity in the context of cigarette smoking.

BIRTH OF THE COOL

When considering the badge that a cigarette packet represented, an identity could be defined as nationalistic, masculine, feminine, or simply different to the crowd. But the unifying theme throughout the interviews was an association between the search for identity and the need, as a young person, to be ‘cool’. Cool had variations in definition over time, and for some, into pretension. But all of the definitions seemed to align with smoking, to the extent that ‘un-cool’ was definitely how the smokers saw their non-smoking peers:

> You can't avoid it. That four letter word. Cool. You want to be cool, smoking was cool. If you smoke, then you're more likely put it this way, the odds of you being cool were definitely that you're more likely to be cool if you smoke than if you didn't. If you’re a non-smoker and you've declared ‘I don't smoke’, your chances of being cool would definitely be smaller.[114]

Within the broad definition of smoking being a cool activity, some cigarettes were cooler than others:

> I do know the first packet of fags I bought was Camel. And then it would be cheapish things. But then I settled, fairly certainly on Marlboro, really, with an occasional foray to

[114] ‘Oscar (1960)’, 4.

> Winston. And Marlboro Red. They hadn't got menthol. They hadn't got low tar or anything like that. Just the red ones. I think they were perceived as being cool.[115]

> Camel soft pack was just the ultra coolest of the cool. It tended to be the cool kids smoked those, the arty kids. The groovy kids.[116]

Confusingly, 'cool' was used in marketing menthol cigarettes, which were often seen, from an adolescent perspective, as uncool brands:

> I mean, if you think about the whole idea of cool, with the menthol brands, the buzzword is cool. And so if you're constantly being presented with the idea of a brand being cool you're going to probably end up subconsciously thinking that. And the idea of having Marlboro Reds or Benson and Hedges with the word cool in its advertising copy is just inconceivable. [117]

The importance of coolness resonates today to some of the ex-teenage ex-smokers; the association of cool with rebellion and independence continues to be a strong and attractive tie:

> And even now, I'm still influenced by whatever it was that made smoking cool.... if you're in your 50s and 60s and you're still smoking, it's because it's your last crutch and it's the one you can't give up because you're sober, you're not drinking, and you're not doing anything else. So it's also an indicator not of coolness, it's an indicator of someone who's perhaps had struggles in their life, someone who's lived the complicated life maybe... And what I mean is someone's saying fuck it, in the face of all evidence. There's something intrinsically appealing about that, perhaps to someone who's always valued pushing against the herd. So if you're someone who's identified very early on with

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[115] Bill & Clare (1961, 1962), 4.
[116] 'Roxy (1968)', 7.
[117] 'Bob (1969)', 9.

> oppositional behaviour or with any challenge or any critical thing, and everyone else tells you that Thatcher's wonderful or all of that stuff that you've had to push against, to see somebody smoking now is like it's like one of the finger-up things you can do. So when I say cool, I suppose that's what I mean now because coolness needs to be unpacked a little bit; it's someone who in the face of all opposition is still marching by the beat of their own drum.[118]

Finally, cool can reflect a nostalgia for a time that was beyond the memory of the smoker:

> And the packaging was interesting, it was old, wasn't it? Players Navy cut would be an example. It's got a lovely cardboard box. They're filterless. You have to do that special thing, to tap the end stuff that's coming out, and then you smoke it in the phone box in the rain.[119]

And beyond the interviews for this thesis, a 2024 BBC study of current young smokers identified an unremembered nostalgic cool-ness:

> It's cool or retro…Because everyone smoked back in the 70s and people look back to those idols. I've got a great classic picture of David Bowie with a cigarette. I think people look back at that and think, oh, yeah, that was cool.[120]

'Cool' is clearly a generic term, but we can comfortably look at subcomponents of the term in the context of our interview responses. And this aligns to sections in the rest of this chapter – in considering nationalistic and gender based values, interviewees associated these with a definition of coolness. We can also align more readily with the academic research that has taken place, which will be briefly examined here.

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[118] 'Alison (1969)', 6.
[119] 'Victor (1965)', 1.
[120] *Smoking Ban: Why Are Young People Still Taking up Smoking?*, 10 May 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/health-68992772.

Hilton's consideration of juvenile smoking is instructive, described as 'to symbolically enter an adult world', and this is reflected empirically in chapter four. Hilton's assessment of personal identity is fairly light, preferring to focus on macro reasons to smoke – economic, social, and cultural reasons, alongside the importance of class alignment as well as a generational habit of smoking, even in the face of medical research and publicity about its negative effects. But by using this context, he concludes that the 'cult of individuality' allowed ordinary smokers to 'recognise the importance of the cigarette to their sense of self'.[121] This is consistent with some interviewee response, but does not necessarily reflect the identity beyond being just a smoker or non-smoker, as this and following chapters will illustrate. Similarly, Levinson et al describe differences in identity between smokers, social smokers and non-smokers, but not beyond this classification.[122]

In considering the alignment between cigarette smoking and national identities, there are parallels with Anderson's *Imagined Communities* in which he defines the nation as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.[123] Anderson was predominantly writing about the nation from within, for 'so many millions of people…to die for such imaginings', but this thinking applies to external nations as well, as will be seen in this chapter when smokers identified with an imagined version of America or France.

Mort's *Cultures of Consumption* considers the links between conspicuous consumption and social status, examines the link between masculinity and consumption, space and culture, and goes on to describe the nature of masculine identity.[124] There are clear links between this thinking and descriptions of smoking both below and in chapter four. Connell's

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[121] Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800-2000*, 240–41.
[122] Arnold H. Levinson et al., 'Smoking, But Not Smokers: Identity Among College Students Who Smoke Cigarettes', *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* 9, no. 8 (2007): 845–52.
[123] Benedict R. O'G Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006).
[124] Frank Mort, *Cultures of Consumption : Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-Century Britain*, Comedia (Routledge, 1996).

conceptualisation of masculinity considers a wider, socially developed characterisation, reinforced by social mores, but not developed in straight historic lines. Connell's definition of masculine hegemony encompasses the social constructs that allow continued power imbalances and inequalities, alongside other masculinities (subordinate, complicit and marginal) which effectively support the hegemony.[125] Again, there is a reflection of this below, almost a search for the permission to be part of a macho club. Griffin takes both Connell's assessment of masculine power dynamics and subsequent criticism, and considers an approach which factors in multiple views. In doing so, Griffin develops the idea of communication communities to define masculine hegemony, structures and substructures, through 'shared engagement in…particular sets of norms, values and expectations'.[126] Griffin later notes that:

> The argument so far has suggested that it is possible to identify communication communities in which particular models of masculinity circulate and are invested with varying amounts of authority or prestige. The next stage of the argument is to connect the cultural and social histories of masculinity by suggesting that historians of masculinity ought to direct their attentions towards the historically specific opportunities, mechanisms or techniques that enabled individuals to identify themselves with those normative models.[127]

Shepard suggests a further category of active resistance which should be added to the masculine sub-groups – this is particularly pertinent to the discussion of youth smoking.[128]

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[125] R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (1 December 2005): 829–59.
[126] Ben Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem', *Gender & History* 30, no. 2 (July 2018): 377–400.
[127] Griffin, 'Hegemonic Masculinity as a Historical Problem', 17.
[128] Alexandra Shepard, 'From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500–1700', *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 281–95.

Neither Mort nor Connell explicitly refer to cigarettes in their assessments of masculinity, but the positioning of patterns of hegemony, behaviour and consumption can define a framework for discussion of first hand smoking accounts. Hilton considers masculinity from the perspective of the Mass Observation research that led to 'Man and His Cigarette':

> It saw how men toyed with the meanings of the cigarette to transform it from its effete, dandified origins into an object which lay at the centre of an often brutal, aggressive and rigorously masculine ritualised language.[129]

And four decades later, much of that masculine aggression was still evident, but often focused on masculinity of brand:

> I did look down at people, if they smoked Marlboro Lights - whether that was masculinity or just 'You're a lightweight. You can't handle whole cigarettes'... and I used to go so far as if I'd have run out of cigarettes and someone gave me a Marlboro Light, I'd deliberately rip off the filter and smoke it without a filter, to prove how tough I was, I suppose subconsciously.[130]

The feminine rebellion that drove cigarette smoking in young women came from a different place. Elliot's 'Women in Smoking since 1890' traces the 'feminisation of the cigarette' and changes in its social acceptance. Elliot's approach only loosely aligned these changes with feminism – as Bruley notes, smoking 'often worked within existing gender norms rather than challenging them'.[131]

Alison's practical interpretation of gender roles is interesting in this context:

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[129] Hilton, *Smoking in British Popular Culture 1800-2000*, 117.
[130] 'Dave (1962)', 2.
[131] Rosemary Elliot, *Women and Smoking since 1890* (New York: Routledge, 2007);
Sue Bruley, review of *Review of Women and Smoking since 1890*, by Rosemary Elliot, *The English Historical Review* 125, no. 513 (2010): 491–92.

> I never thought of (smoking) as intrinsically masculine, but obviously there was a sense of 'I'm doing something good girls shouldn't do'. So obviously I want to do it.[132]

Elliot's analysis of women and smoking from the 1890s until 2000 is instructive, in that there is a clear path from smoking as a 'symbol of emancipation, equality and escape from gendered demands' in the late nineteenth century, through an association with emerging female identities in the early part of the twentieth century, and even as a symbol of equality. But by the time we get to the end of the twentieth century, the profiles of female smokers amongst class groupings and young parents is dispiriting, along with 'gendered social expectations: the desire to be thin, (to)...appear confident, to portray the right image...to attain educationally and socially.'[133] Murray et al conducted 49 interviews with young people in a Derbyshire town in the mid 1980s, establishing a link not just with class and social status, but with time, particularly in the context of motherhood ('for many young mothers smoking was perceived as a valuable aid to organizing their daily routine').[134] Jacobson however, writing in 1981 and 1986, took a stricter feminist approach to the history, cultural and societal perspective on smoking.[135] As Berridge notes:

> Smoking was, so Jacobson argued, a sign of anger at a subordinate role in society and it was the pressures of that society which kept women smoking. Women started smoking for these reasons and were soon addicted, enslaved and unable to give up.[136]

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[132] 'Alison (1969)', 7.
[133] Elliot, *Women and Smoking since 1890*, 167.
[134] Michael Murray et al., *Smoking Among Young Adults. A Social Psychological Analysis* (1988), 59.
[135] Bobbie Jacobson, *The Ladykillers: Why Smoking Is a Feminist Issue*, Politics of Health (London: Pluto Press, 1981);
Jacobson, *Beating the Ladykillers*.
[136] Virginia Berridge, 'Constructing Women and Smoking as a Public Health Problem in Britain 1950–1990s', *Gender & History* 13, no. 2 (2001): 328–48.

Berridge considers women in the context of public health policy, tracing changing constructs; whilst there existed a common thread of 'Women as mothers'; 'the image of women from the 1970s to the 1990s was overwhelmingly a passive one. Women were the innocent victims of passive smoking, of the mass media, or of the forces of addiction.'[137] The most controversial anti-smoking campaign of the 1970s, according to Elliott, asked 'is it fair to force your baby to smoke a cigarette'- the outrage was 'not because the woman was smoking, but because she was heavily pregnant and naked.'[138]

Figure 9 - Is it fair? ad
Getty images

Tinkler considers the feminisation of cigarette smoking through a number of shifts. Firstly, the mechanisms whereby the cigarette was depicted as part of the presentation of a heterosexual identity and where smoking practices were embedded in heterosexual relations and rituals. Secondly, a discernible shift in the way women were addressed by advertisements, from potential women smokers in the 1930s to more general consumers in the 1960s. Thirdly and relatedly, the significance attached to women smoking changed between 1920 and 1970. In the 1930s, smoking was utilised to signify that women were 'modern'; in the period 1960-70, smoking served to indicate that women were

Figure 10 - Kim ad (1983)
History of Advertising Trust

[137] Berridge, 'Constructing Women and Smoking as a Public Health Problem in Britain 1950–1990s', 344.
[138] Elliot, *Women and Smoking since 1890*, 147.

recognised, and accorded status, as consumers.[139] Tinkler follows this theme in 'Red Tips for Hot Lips', an examination of female smoking between 1920-1970, through the lens of advertisements in women's magazines:

> Between 1960 and 1970, smoking served to indicate that women had been acknowledged as important consumers who were motivated to smoke by the offer of savings coupons and/or who required a cigarette of their own in what was otherwise 'a man's world'. Utilisation of the themes of modernity, independence and liberation were, nevertheless, contained within advertising discourse.[140]

This, and Tinkler's third stage certainly stands up when the marketing and product delivery of the 1970s and 1980s are considered. Cigarettes had been marketed to women before, but not before in line with a view as independent consumers. The themes of slimness (of packaging and cigarette), pureness (not least through a theme of white filters and packaging), and sophistication (implied by marketing and also seen in package design and typography) were clearly aimed at the female market, albeit in a rather condescending fashion. As Tinkler notes: 'Cigarette advertisements implied that smoking was a sign of women's liberation, while the brand names aligned this liberation with being, and becoming, thin.'[141] The assertion that taste equalled strength, for a more macho smoke, was reversed, as women were assumed to want a lower strength/tar cigarette.[142]

Figure 11 - Consulate ad (1975) History of Advertising Trust

[139] Penny Tinkler, 'Refinement and Respectable Consumption: The Acceptable Face of Women's Smoking in Britain, 1918–1970', *Gender & History* 15, no. 2 (2003): 342–60.
[140] Penny Tinkler, '"Red Tips for Hot Lips": Advertising Cigarettes for Young Women in Britain, 1920-70', *Women's History Review* 10, no. 2 (1 June 2001): 268.
[141] Tinkler, *Smoke Signals : Women, Smoking and Visual Culture in Britain*, 200.
[142] Elliot, *Women and Smoking since 1890*, 142.

PERSONAL IDENTITY

Along with cigarette smoking as part of the identity, comes the formation of identity as a whole; gender may be part of this:

> To go back to the thing about cool as (an) armour, it was an essential component. So while regretting ever smoking at all, there were moments when it helped me and that's a very hard thing to explain but smoking does put some force field around you. It was very wrapped up in my identity at one point. I definitely aspired to be hard, to be competent at violence. I never was. Whenever I have been involved in any serious violence, my shortcomings were exposed almost immediately. But smoking was part of that...Lee Brilleaux, I bet he was rubbish in a fight, but he looked like a very hard man.[143]

> I was completely out of my depth. So in order to fit in with that, I started to try and mirror what was happening around me. So at that time it was very clean cut, that American 501s, Doc Martens, Morrissey quiff, leather jacket and with that came a whole slew of accessories, and cigarettes were one of them.[144]

For Tom, the creation of identity went alongside the function of smoking as an act of reward, within a created sense of self:

> Now I think that it's like very early, about 15, that you can feel that your rewards need to be either cultural or physical. And the reward of a cigarette is like a bit of nicotine input that keeps you awake or keeps you alert. So what you've seen in the movies, when John Wayne lights a cigarette, is rewarding himself for having killed lots of Indians, for having been the good guy or whatever. The stereotype of everybody, even the good guys, smoke

[143] 'Zach (1958)', 7.
[144] 'Alison (1969)', 3.

> a cigarette. But it's, if you smoke a cigarette, you identify with that kind of reward, you're feeling good after doing something.[145]

The dichotomy of identity in adolescence, around the need to fit in whilst creating a unique personal identity, can be sequential:

> I was always looking to fit in. So that's quite an important part of it. And smoking was a way of doing that in a shorthand. It was like a semiotic signifier that I belonged to a particular tribe or a particular group. I wasn't clean cut. I wasn't obedient. And obviously my hair and my clothes sort of shifted and changed over that time as well.[146]

> However grown up you are, you still believe that that smoking slightly out of the ordinary cigarettes makes you more interesting. Which is nonsense, of course, but what you believe in the world of being cool is often not connected with reality. I mean, it feels daft looking back on it, but at the time it was the most natural thing in the world.[147]

> But you know, with the whole punk rock thing, there was always kids that wanted to smoke something different as well. I guess I was guilty of that – Perfectos, Black Cat – you'd flash the pack. Certainly there was an element of wanting to be a little bit different to other people.[148]

The association of personal identity with certain brands has the effect of creating a personal brand. This can also sit with fitting in, uniqueness or fashionable/newness:

> I smoked (Embassy) because they weren't advertised. I smoked them because I liked the taste, but I smoked them because they were slightly different to what everyone else

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[145] 'Tom (1962)', 1.
[146] 'Alison (1969)', 2.
[147] 'Zach (1958)', 4.
[148] 'Frank (1960)', 4.

> smoked. They were shorter. You had to push the top up, you pushed up and then it was a little flip instead of a carton. So you put those on the pub table and it says, oh, there's a guy that doesn't just buy the advertised brand. There's a guy that thinks for himself and finds something a little different. I'm not a poseur. I'm not smoking something ostentatiously foreign and weird. I'm not a wannabe Yank. But I've got this little niche for myself…I'm trying to create an identity. Like I don't listen to Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd. I listen to The Smiths and New Order. I don't listen to Duran Duran and Wham, I listen to the Pixies. I'm not listening to Prog. I'm just trying to create this identity where an Embassy seems to fit that because they didn't advertise. So there was no meaning to them, it was the meaning that I created - this is my brand because there's no association to them.[149]
>
> I guess I wouldn't have smoked that much and if I'm going to smoke a lot, it would have been a cheaper brand. So you might buy Sobranies if you're going to a party. So the Blitz parties, I went to, and I knew a few of those people from Islington. So I'd go to a Blue Rondo gig or a Spandau Ballet gig or something, then it would always be about the look, wouldn't it? So you wouldn't pull out your Number Six ! You're trying to impress, and be accepted as part of that. [150]
>
> I thought maybe standing out (by smoking Gitanes) was looking different, looking cool. Not being part of the pack, which is what I wanted.[151]

The idea of fitting in could be quite specific to a political or social identity:

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[149] 'John (1971)', 8.
[150] 'Michael (1959)', 3.
[151] 'Nathan (1959)', 5.

> But probably at that age because I was buying into a very sort of anti-elitist mindset at that stage because of the whole punk rock thing actually. And so I would have been much happier smoking roll-ups, Golden Virginia, Old Holborn, or Players Number Six, which I thought were a sort of proletarian badge of honour. [152]

Alison considers the idea of cigarette smoking as a self-destructive identity choice:

> I know that's exactly the sort of thing that I'd be drawn to when I was 15, that Jim Morrison self-destructive thing. And what are cigarettes if not self-destructive? I mean, they're the most logically and cognitively and rationally the most terrible thing that you can possibly do, but what's always fascinated me, is that that disappears when you are faced with whether you want to be someone who smokes or someone who doesn't smoke.[153]

The interpretation of identity in the context of growing up might suggest that the identity itself is a transitional state. For many, cigarette smoking helped to form an identity that might still be forming well beyond adolescence, and beyond the context of awareness within a social group:

> It's really weird that smoking has become so much part of my identity. I know I shouldn't smoke. I know it's not good for my health. I just can't seem to stop; it's not even about the addiction, because there are days and periods when I don't smoke. It's so wrapped up with my identity, in the same way as I wear rings every day. It's that intrinsic thing. I think it's self-identity because it's not an identity I portray. I don't necessarily. I'm not smoking now, you know. I mean, I won't smoke until I get home. And then it would be in my garden, and nobody would see. So it's not like 'look at me, I'm a smoker'. I think it's the self-identity, which is weird, as it's not doing my health any good and not doing my

[152] 'Steve (1961)', 3.
[153] 'Alison (1969)', 6.

> pocket any good. And smoking is now ridiculously expensive. But I think maybe because it's my only vice, I don't drink, I don't do drugs. It's a bit of a guilty pleasure. [154]

NATIONAL IMAGINARIES: ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Many interviewees described particular identity alignment with themes of nationalism, health, gender and, above all, a need to be 'cool'. These will all be explored through the views of interviewees in the rest of this chapter.

Alignment with cigarettes that had Britishness was relevant to many interviewees, at a time when the nature of nationalism was in transition in Britain. British identity and brand association was part of an eclectic mix of influences – Clarke describes this from a style perspective:

> An examination of male working-class youth quietly reveals that "normal" dressing means using elements drawn from government surplus stores, sportswear (such as training shoes, track suits, rugby shirts, "Fred Perry" tops, hunting jackets, rally jackets, flying suits, etc.), subcultural clothing appropriated from different historical eras via the secondhand clothing markets, and, finally, mass market fashion, which itself contains forms of recontextualized meaning, be it ski jumpers or work overalls.[155]

Joe Tye from the US's Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco suggests that the American experience is more pre-formed:

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[154] 'Roxy (1968)', 8.
[155] Clarke, 'Defending Ski-Jumpers: A Critique of Theories of Youth Sub-Cultures'.

> The 14- to 18-year-old age period is when they're really most at risk. That's really when kids are trying to establish their identity. Philip Morris and RJR are trying to give them a ready-made identity - all you have to do is light up and smoke.[156]

Interviewees saw a tougher, masculine and nationalistic edge to smoking British branded cigarettes:

> Marlboro Reds always used to cut the throat… you'd wake up the next morning and you always knew that that was what you'd smoked. Same with B&H, but that was a conscious choice – you smoked them cos they were a bit cooler. I know I'm going to look a bit cooler, but I know I'm going to pay for it in the morning.[157]

At the heart of the national view was an association with quality:

> B&H were a very, popular brand that sold a lot of units, I think. And I wouldn't associate them with being a middle class or working class brand. It's a brand of a serious smoker. Because they're quite strong. They're good quality. The only reason you'd buy them is if you know they're good cigarettes. To me, they're the king of cigarette brands. I do see them as a British cigarette. All day long. [158]

Whereas for Tom, the association went beyond a qualitative perspective:

> I think B&H almost had that cultural resonance of being the default cigarette, but also so ubiquitous that you don't even question whether they're any good or not.[159]

For Ian, Benson and Hedges as a brand became part of a normalised British vocabulary:

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[156] Susan Cohen, *The Tobacco Industry, Which Spends Billions on Advertising and Promotions, Says It's Not Trying to Recruit Teen Smokers . Opponents Say the Industry's Just Blowing Smoke*, n.d. https://tobacco-img.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/06212034/recruityouth.pdf
[157] 'Harry (1975)', 4.
[158] 'Steve (1961)', 6.
[159] Chapman, *Great Expectorations*, 5.

> I mean, you still quote now, you say 'I'm just nipping down the shop for 10 Benson and a pint of milk and a paper. I suppose they are a bit British.[160]

For Michael, the choice of a British brand was about fitting in at a societal level:

> If you stuck with the John Player, the Bensons, the Rothmans and all of that you'd be fine because they were perceived as normal. And I didn't want to be doing something effete or weird or esoteric. I wanted to be doing something down the middle.[161]

And this was in line with the marketing thinking :

> In general, young adult smokers are looking for big brands - Nike, Adidas, Tango, Bud, Marlboro, B&H. Again it is important to remember that most young adult smokers are mainstream individuals with quite ordinary tastes. They want brands for credibility - for many, having a quirky brand is almost as uncomfortable as having no brand because it sets them apart from the gang rather than making them part of it.[162]

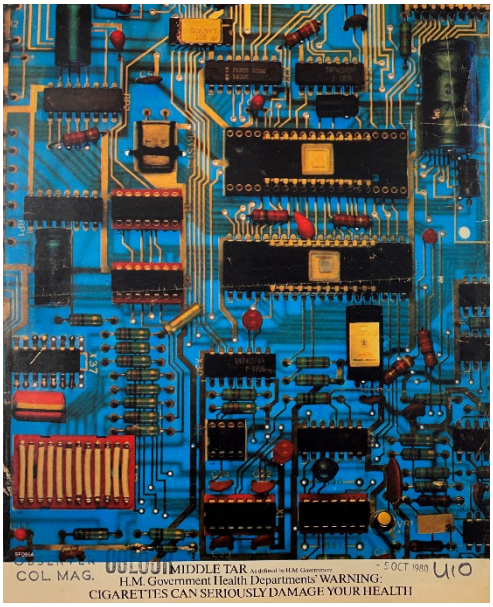

Figure 12 - Benson & Hedges ad (1980) History of Advertising Trust

But for Nathan, it was a fitting in that he was anxious to avoid:

> I associate (Benson and Hedges) that with builders; Essex boys, and yuppies.[163]

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[160] 'Ian (1972)', 6.
[161] 'Steve (1961)', 4.
[162] *TBWA Simons Parker - Marlboro Image Research Report* (HM Government archive, 1998).
[163] 'Nathan (1959)', 4.

Clearly there is association between class and Britishness, individuals made their class based judgements on both the preferred class association and also the areas to avoid. The sense of national and self-identity felt by Will, is completely in line with the nationalistic marketing briefs from CDP that were explored in chapter two:

> Coming back from having lived in America for a bit because I didn't really think about Britishness prior to that at all, you only really become aware of your nationality when you're not in the nation. Then suddenly it becomes really important. But [B&H are about] Britishness, but in more in that sense of cool Britishness...I don't know how much I'm projecting into the past, but there's something around football fans singing The Great Escape music. That cavalier, fuck you all, we're cleverer than everyone else, we're funnier than everyone else, we're cooler than everyone else, our music's cooler than everyone else, it wasn't something I was carrying around with me all the time. I'm not a patriot by any stretch of the imagination, but I guess at that time I had some idea of the coolness of the country. So when I was in America, I did definitely adopt that, it became quite important to me, in terms of my identity, in a way that it really hadn't before.[164]

However, the ubiquity of the British cigarette and its ordinariness was seen by others as a real negative brand trait:

> [John Player Special are] reaching so much harder than the actual contents deserve. Very ordinary English King Size cigarettes with very glossy packaging...They're announcing themselves as classy and above and everybody's looking at their fags and thinking they're just ordinary cigarettes in very shiny packets.[165]

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[164] 'Will (1966)', 5.
[165] 'Zach (1958)', 7.

And there was an element, for the rebellious young people, to avoid the cigarettes of a previous generation, unless it was in an ironic, playful sense:

> I think Rothmans, Dunhill, John Player, the stuff that you would see in the back of your dad's Playboy, basically it's what older men would smoke, not ironically in any way that we would smoke them.[166]

WHO WANTS TO LIVE IN AMERICA?

Essentially, the strength of the British branding of a cigarette allowed the smoker to project their own ideas of national identities and class onto both the act of smoking and the ownership of a badge, whether for themselves or others. Similarly, a choice of cigarette allowed a projection of Americanness, although this would be through a British lens. The young British person's (un)healthy obsession with America meant that for coolness, brands like Marlboro, Camel, Winston, Chesterfield and Lucky Strike were a popular choice. But the marketing, particularly for Marlboro, often landed in a way that could not have been predicted:

> Cowboys weren't particularly cool, but because the culture was so alien to us, and on the other side of the world – it was something you just would dream of. Whether it was Marlon Brando, James Dean, through to the punk rockers – they all seemed to have Marlboros. I certainly associated that with coolness.[167]

Packaging, presentation, and the use of the packet as a badge was essential to many young people smoking American brands. In practical terms, sometimes the price of the badge could be higher than an easier smoke:

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[166] 'Alison (1969)', 11.
[167] 'Dave (1962)', 6.

> I think the coolest ones would have been Stuyvesant. The soft crush pack. They could go into your cap sleeve or your T-shirt. But of course, then they get crushed, don't they?[168]

> There was a big thing for American cigarettes. It was all about Marlboro and Camel, Chesterfield, Winston. They were the cool cigarettes, but you couldn't buy them in 10's, which was a bit of a drawback because a packet of 20 Marlboro was 30p, that was quite an outlay if you didn't have any money and then of course if you did buy a packet of 20, everybody would be scrounging them off you so they wouldn't last very long. But American cigarettes were definitely the cool ones to smoke at my school and I don't really know why that was, but that continued throughout my smoking career.[169]

Most interviewees associated smoking American cigarettes with a sense of self-identity that they wanted to be linked to America:

> I guess (Marlboro had an) American affinity, it goes hand in hand with the mid-80s, like a pair of 501s. You had to go and buy a secondhand pair if you wanted them, before they were freely available with that certain cut, so that was the association that you were trying to look American. Those are the people that smoked Marlboro, the people who bought or wore 501s.[170]

[168] 'Michael (1959)', 1.
[169] 'Oscar (1960)', 2.
[170] Pete (1967), 5.

There was an identification with an imagined America, in the same way as the nationalistic perspective was often about an imagined Britain: 'Because American kids weren't wearing what we were wearing, what we were wearing was our idea of America.'[171]

Figure 13 - Marlboro cowboy (1995)
Getty images

And there was also a type of smoker who rationalised American cigarettes in an ironic way, in line with what was a significant political perspective amongst young people:

> I suppose Marlboro were quite cool. People who smoked Marlboro were a little bit aloof. But nobody that I knew who smoked Marlboro had any admiration for America, so even though it's always marketed as like a cowboy thing or Marlboro man, Marlboro had a different connotation in the UK and in Europe. For all their marketing of the Marlboro man, I don't necessarily think that was their market here. It was quite a rock and roll cigarette, smoked by people who were quite well travelled, who considered themselves to be quite cosmopolitan. Arty types.[172]

> I very much associated the branding with an identification... I was very politically active. I went all in. So there was absolutely some conscious playing with the style of something that was completely, diametrically opposed to what you really believed in. We could ape American style; it's a parody - I didn't know the term postmodern at the time, but there was this postmodern irony around it, that wasn't fully formed, but that we were seeing in

[171] 'Alison (1969)', 5.
[172] 'Roxy (1968)', 5.

> other places, in magazines, and in TV and youth programming that was somehow legitimising something. The symbols that we were using, we were engaging with in a very playful postmodern way. This was semi-conscious…But there was this thing about playing with the signifiers and claiming them as your own, but not necessarily being part of the fashion at the time…I think the Americana that we were pulling on was very consciously an imagined one. This wasn't to do with reality. This wasn't Reaganism. We hated any conformity. Political conformity of that sort was absolutely rejected. But somehow it was completely separate to this imagined Americana that we were keying into. So I'm not saying any of this was conscious, but there was definitely a sense that we could take bits and pieces…using things as being a celebration of transgression in every single possible way, of putting things together that didn't belong, and that thrilled me.[173]

Finally, there was a view that by smoking American cigarettes, the smoker had made a conscious decision to be above the ordinary, in their self-identity:

> I think my reasons for smoking Kent was because they were American fags, but they didn't look like Winston or Marlboro. I think (Winston smokers) are probably all right. I think they're a person who's thought about what they smoke. They've put some thought into it. Whereas Rothmans and B&H smokers they're people who hadn't really thought about it.[174]

Putting a packet of American cigarettes on the table could mean that the smoker wanted to be seen as authentically linked to the world of preferred popular culture. Or it might mean a connection with a British Americana that could be shared. It wasn't a direct connection to the

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[173] 'Alison (1969)', 4.
[174] 'Zach (1958)', 6.

marketing messages; it was unlikely that young smokers truly identified with the Marlboro cowboy or the rugged outdoorsman in the Camel adverts. There was perhaps a nod to the more subtle messages around freedom and libertarianism, but it seems more likely that the draw to the brand was more about non-marketing influences.

FRENCHNESS - FROM COOL TO CHIC

As part of their adolescent journey of identity discovery, many of the interviewees diverted to France for inspiration and image development. There they found Gauloises and Gitanes in particular; often aligned with the self-image that they wanted to develop, but also with the trappings of a fairly unsmokeable cigarette:

> When I started smoking seriously, I did have a little go at Gitanes. Didn't get on very well with them, it's still the coolest packaging of all of them, but didn't get on very well with them cause they were just too strong.[175]

> I'll tell you what, you can't get cooler than (Gauloises), can you? I'd even ask for them. Well, you know, it's a serious smoke, isn't it? It's commitment, isn't it? They taste awful, they make your snot black. They stink. They literally stink...Imagine if you're going an average student union disco and everyone's smoking there. Whatever roll ups or they're smoking their Bensons or Silk Cut and then someone pulls them out. That's the art student or the dance student, isn't it? It's obviously it's like a pretty cool one of them.[176]

[175] 'Frank (1960)', 2.
[176] 'Michael (1959)', 7.

> What I got into my head is that if I smoked French cigarettes, then I would look sophisticated as well. So, I would buy them. They were disgusting! It's a bit like your first taste of alcohol. You know, it doesn't taste very nice, but you put up with it. The packaging, you know, the very soft packaging with the very distinguishable colouring and logo... I think once I learned how to smoke, to actually draw the smoke into my lungs. And then I realised that the French cigarettes were foul, right? They were a foul experience.[177]

Figure 14 - Gauloises ad (1976)
History Of Advertising Trust

Similarly to the invented America, there was an invented Frenchness; it might have had some basis in reality, but had the disadvantage of being re-invented by observation:

> The jazz kids (smoked Gauloises); there was a tribe at art college who would wear berets unironically. So in the same way that there was an invented Americana, there was an invented Frenchness as well.[178]

> Left bank intellectuals smoke them, but also French lorry drivers. Whereas in this country, they are very definitely the cigarette of poncy intellectuals, and it's almost like a cliché of poncy intellectuals, it's a signifier to the *Daily Telegraph* that you're woke if you smoke Gauloises.[179]

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[177] Pete (1967) 9/4/24, 3.
[178] 'Alison (1969)', 12.
[179] 'Zach (1958)', 6.

As we have seen, the brand of a cigarette could carry a nationalistic identity, whether real or imagined. But brands could also carry other identifiers, and the multiple facets of the brand might match the identity that the young people wanted to develop. Benson and Hedges, for example, are described above by interviewees not just as proudly British (To me, they're the king of cigarette brands. I do see them as a British cigarette. All day long.[180]), but variously with qualifiers of masculinity, strength and quality. And just as the boundaries of subcultures were blurring, so the compromises around some of the branding qualities could waver - a smoker may associate with the nationalism or associations, but justify against some of the other qualities or myths. This contributed to the creation of brand sub-subcultures, where brands were so strong that they could pull together people of disparate identities who shared a brand affinity – this is explored further at the end of this chapter.

High in priority for many young smoker was an identity that associated with gender, and this could often influence cigarette brand choice:

> Girls smoked as much as boys, if not more. Girls were less inclined to smoke the rock'n'roll thing, I think they were more open to other brands. Boys generally smoked Marlboros or Rothmans or something like that. Girls would smoke whatever they smoked, but they definitely liked St Moritz. My first girlfriend smoked roll your owns and she was ahead of the game.[181]

[180] 'Steve (1961)', 6.
[181] 'Oscar (1960)', 7.

MASCULINITY : HE CAN'T BE A MAN, 'COS HE DOESN'T SMOKE THE SAME CIGARETTES AS ME

As early as 1965, using the CPI femininity scale, Vitz and Johnson provided a clear link between not just masculinity and cigarette brand, but also additives (i.e. menthol/mint) and filters, both of which were considered non-masculine. Starr's study of cigarette smoking and masculinity in the US describes the launch of a male focused Marlboro brand in the early 1950s: 'they recast their brand, resolving to promote the new filter Marlboro in ways that would combat the notion that…"there was something cissy about smoking filter cigarettes"'.[182]

Certainly the marketing of particular brands took advantage of the masculine alignment, although, as explored in chapter two, the message received was not always the one that the marketing agency wanted to deliver. Although this marketing was as relevant to the observer as much as it was to the consumer – part of the aggression that Hilton describes from Mass Observation was a recognisable masculine judgement, something which a number of interviewees commented on:

> It's almost a tribal thing, isn't it? You have opinions about people who smoke certain brands. I always think the stronger tobacco cigarette smokers, not the Lights or Silk Cut or anything like that, you have a certain, probably more effeminate, opinion of the lighter ones than you do of the stronger versions… So these ones (Rothmans), it's more of a masculine, top end type person perhaps who smokes what they're trying to convey, than perhaps one of the others. And that's how you build your whole target market, isn't it? So we want people who aspire to be this.[183]

[182] Michael E. Starr, 'The Marlboro Man: Cigarette Smoking and Masculinity in America*', *The Journal of Popular Culture* 17, no. 4 (1984): 45–57.
[183] 'Eddie (1970)', 8.

> And the other thing that some people, particularly guys, wouldn't necessarily take a Silk Cut. Because it was considered, you know, that's a rubbish cigarette. You know, I don't want that, I'll have one of my own.[184]

> I would have thought the simple thing would be the stronger the cigarette the more macho. So all the low tar brands would have been seen as more feminine. Even though by the time I stopped everyone was smoking Silk Cut. So that then everyone was doing other things, so it wouldn't have been divided before. Would King Size, be more of a female thing? I don't know. Obviously Number Six, Number Ten, I wouldn't have seen those as a woman's cigarette.[185]

> Yes, there's another kind of attachment here, which is this is probably something to do with my psychology, which was the stronger the better. It's how I was a young man, you go out to a bar or a pub, what have they got? Have the strongest drink. What's got the most proof? So, there's that kind of attachment, which is what tobacco is the strongest, in the sense that in some way proves masculinity. There's another element to it, which if you build up the tolerance, it seems as though you need to have a stronger cigarette.[186]

Masculinity could align to identity quite naturally in formative years:

> And then around 5th year high school, I started being able to get into pubs. And then that's where it really takes off - my love of smoking. I discover I really like drinking and smoking. I just think it's a greatest thing ever. So the Horseshoe pub would allow 15 or 16 year olds into the back room. Play pool. Listen to the jukebox. You know Jimi, Thin Lizzy. And I learn to smoke and drink and play pool in the backroom of the Horseshoe. If I have

[184] 'Grace (1953)', 7.
[185] 'Michael (1959)', 6.
[186] Pete (1967), 2.

> my own money, it's Embassy Filter. If I'm sharing a pack with someone else, it's B&H - pretty popular choice. There's Rothmans, JPS, never really understood what they were all about. Advertised heavily, but never liked the taste of them. We'd feel 'we've got B&H, we're ok'. Silk Cut were still kicking around. Girls always liked Silk Cut.[187]
>
> There was a whole adult world that basically I joined by the time I was 14 or 15, by which time it's not about being grown up. It's just the fact that you're a smoker, so you have fags. And it's cool. I was definitely one of those rebellious boys. It's certainly cool in the fact that you walk down the street smoking a cigarette. I'd leave the house, walking down the street, time for a cigarette. I learnt to be able to speak with it hanging out of my mouth. You imagine that it looks cool in a way that looks like fucking Humphrey Bogart or something. You know, it's part of his coolness is that he's got a cigarette hanging out of his mouth.[188]

Concessions were made to masculine identity when it came to going out and meeting girls:

> But sometimes girls found rolling tobacco a bit nasty. And I would often buy Marlboro Lights if I was going out. And, you know, you're chatting to girls. You want to offer them a smoke. So that was my compromise. I quite liked them. So I would smoke Marlboro Lights if I could afford it.[189]

Smoking, including/especially in the young male, afforded the opportunity to assert a dominant masculinity within communication communities (a 'macho' smoke), to take advantage of the social, and socially accepted, opportunity, and to fall in line with normative brand acceptance, even though this may actually be in line with active resistance. This is practically examined in

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[187] 'John (1971)', 3.
[188] 'Will (1966)', 2.
[189] 'John (1971)', 3.

Hunt et al, assessing changing models of masculinity and femininity across three generations of Scottish families, partly concluding that changes in gender identities had contributed to a reduction in gender-specific smoking identities towards the end of the century.[190] This is supported by some of the interviewee responses:

> Guys who smoked Marlboro were trying to be tough guys, which is never a good look.[191]

> At the age of 14, I would have thought that amongst my peer group, I would have said that 80% of them smoked and they all were doing it because they wanted to be a man and I was completely the opposite, completely the other way.[192]

[190] Kate Hunt, Mary-Kate Hannah, and Patrick West, 'Contextualizing Smoking: Masculinity, Femininity and Class Differences in Smoking in Men and Women from Three Generations in the West of Scotland', *Health Education Research* 19, no. 3 (June 2004): 239–49.
[191] 'Bob (1969)', 5.
[192] 'Frank (1960)', 8.

FEMININITY: YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY

Some interviewees expressed unprompted views on femininity, certainly in the context of Tinkler's view of consumerist behaviour:

> So I think the Rothman's Royale was a much longer slimmer cigarette, wasn't it? And it came in a flat box - one side had ten and the other side had ten, with foil. I loved the detail of the case. I can't remember if they were any stronger but I think probably I quite liked it if they weren't too strong, which is why I think I ended up smoking menthol cigarettes cause they weren't quite so potent. And I used to buy menthol More which again, because I certainly wasn't sophisticated at all, but they were, they were long and slim and they looked rather nice.[193]

Figure 15 - More ad (1976)
History of Advertising Trust

It is Tinkler's interpretation of consumer behaviour that chimes with interviewee feedback – the marketing messages were very specific and seemed capable of landing as desired, albeit with some healthy skepticism. From a historical perspective, the fact that these patronising marketing messages of slimness, mildness and sophistication actually impacted the young female smoker suggests that Jacobson's assertion that they were smoking as a 'sign of anger at a subordinate role in society' was misplaced. It can be argued from our interviewee responses that the compliance with the marketing messages actually confirmed a compliance with this subordination, in much the same way that compliance with stronger macho advertising confirmed stereotypical male identities. However, Alison's response to a question about brand

[193] 'Bill & Clare (1961, 1962)', 6.

alignment to masculinity and femininity is interesting, particularly her conclusion on ‘bad girls’, in the context of slow progress to gender equality:

> That's an interesting one because I think I would have rejected that. I mean what I liked about those brands is that they weren't gendered. And in fact, there was something about smoking a Marlboro that at that time felt quite important. I've only ever drunk pints for that reason. I've never had a half because in the mid 80s that was quite transgressive. Don't give me a port and lemon, I drink pints and it's the same thing with cigarettes. It was like, almost like a challenge and Silk Cuts - that's why they were a bit problematic because they were a girl's cigarette. I don't have a sense that smoking was essentially a masculine thing, it was a bad girl thing, and everything bad and naughty was always gendered as masculine.[194]

LOW TAR - SMOKE YOURSELF FITTER!

French cigarettes were the epitome of badge marketing – interviewees talked of a bid to be different, or elevated in status, even if they were ‘a foul experience’! Less painful to smoke would be the lower tar and menthol cigarettes. There was a clear and regular reference from interviewees to link both low tar and menthol cigarettes to a health conscious and less macho approach to smoking. For many, the reality was that by switching to a lower tar cigarette, the level of satisfaction diminished to the extent that they smoked more – a true win for marketing, and, with the propensity to take deeper draws, a further contradiction of any health win:

> Yeah, of course (I could smoke more of them). Forty on a good day. Rather than 20 Bensons... you might be away for 6-7 days at a time. And then you'd smoke a lot more than if you were at home, obviously. You know, then you try and delay the first one of the

[194] ‘Alison (1969)’, 8.

> day until midday. But when you're on tour, of course, you're in a hotel. You're having breakfast in there and you have the greasy spoon breakfast. So then obviously you think 'I'll have a cigarette' after that.[195]
>
> (I'd smoke) Silk Cut for a while when I started being a little bit aware of health things. But then I would tear the filters off, or I'd wrap a Rizla around the holes.[196]

There was a strong anti-low tar movement, at least at a social level, sometimes governed by a machismo that higher tar cigarettes had more/stronger taste, even if they were worse for your health:

> There was a stigma – high tar was bad for you and low tar – there was nothing in there. There was a smoking snobbishness against low tar because you couldn't get anything out of them. If we had to smoke them, we took the tip off.[197]
>
> The people that smoked (Silk Cut) were 'try hards'. They wanted to appear like they were smoking, but they didn't have the guts for a real cigarette.[198]
>
> I think in about second year at school, everybody switched over to Silk Cut. They were originally regarded as a bit girly. But maybe the rationale between all of us starting smoking them was that you'd have more chance of getting off with girls if you were smoking Silk Cut because more girls will ask you for cigarettes, they might not want to be seen smoking B&H, so there may even have been a gender demarcation between the brands.[199]

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[195] 'Michael (1959)', 3.
[196] 'Alison (1969)', 7.
[197] Liam (1966), 7.
[198] 'Pete (1967)', 6.
[199] 'Bob (1969)', 3.

Lower tar were also marketed as a means to give up smoking…by smoking:

> The thing about Silk Cuts was that you smoked them if you were trying to quit and it was absolute nonsense because you're still smoking. But you could tell yourself that you were cutting down. If somebody had a packet of Silk Cut, you know you're talking about the message that a packet would send - if somebody produced a packet of Silk Cut then invariably, they were trying to quit. Or they were kidding themselves that they were trying to quit. They're horrible cigarettes. There used to be a joke : 'How can you spot a Silk Cut smoker?' 'They're the ones that are cross eyed because they're looking to see if anything's happening on the end of their fag'.[200]

Smokers would have strong opinions about the sense in giving up by smoking lower tar and, by definition, being less of a 'real smoker':

> So by your mid to late 20s, when mortality was starting to loom a little bit larger, and you felt a little less invincible…it was a health choice…You weren't hard as nails anymore, but you were still smoking. It was an acknowledgement, like choosing wholemeal bread rather than white processed, you weren't cutting out carbs completely, but it was something. And again, it's impossible to separate it from my stage of life. I probably would have judged somebody for smoking Silk Cut when I was a lot younger, as a bit too sensible a choice.[201]

MENTHOL: MINTY FRESHNESS!

Menthol cigarettes, where the tobacco or filter is treated to give minty flavour, built on the refreshing aspect of mint to surround the brands (primarily Consulate, Belair and St Moritz) with associations of health, freshness, sophistication, and femininity. Brand images would typically

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[200] 'Oscar (1960)', 8.
[201] 'Alison (1969)', 12.

show waterfalls and greenery – Consulate's strapline was 'cool as a mountain stream', although cool in this context was probably more of a literal message. The marketing of menthol cigarettes, predicated on their 'minty fresh taste' was successful insofar as it disguised the reality of smoking, stealthily pushing the line of health and femininity that had been part of the marketing agenda since the 1930s. Combining the apparent elegance of the cigarette (most menthol cigarettes had white filters; brands like St Moritz had a gold band; More were long and slim) with sophisticated imagery and stylish packaging appealed to a market keen to move away from the dirty macho smoke to a point of stylish sophistication. For some smokers, menthol cigarettes were an entry point into 'real' smoking:

> My uncle got married and I remember one of the bridesmaids offered me a cigarette. They were Consulate cigarettes. I'd never smoked menthol cigarettes before…Prior to that, cigarettes I had smoked, and hadn't particularly enjoyed, had been probably Embassy Number Six or the migots which everybody in Scotland smoked…So that's basically when I got into smoking when I was eight, the gateway drug being Consulates, so I smoked Consulates for a while. [202]

In a similar theme to that of low tar cigarettes, many people who considered themselves 'real smokers' were dismissive of menthol cigarettes:

> I'm really trying not to say (Consulate) were a girl's cigarette, but they were. I think teenage me would have regarded them as unmanly. Obviously that is a ludicrous judgement. I quite liked menthol fags. I mean, they'd give you a headache if you smoked two packs of them in a sitting. Who would have smoked them? I mean, if you want the

[202] 'Bob (1969)', 1.

> unfiltered teenage me opinion, people who weren't tough enough to smoke proper cigarettes.[203]

For some, there was a clear link between menthol cigarettes and sexuality:

> Menthols… were in the glossy magazines, the Sunday supplements and if your girlfriend had Cosmo. When I was younger people would pinch them out of their mum's purses and you would try them, and just be 'Oh, why?!' So very much marketed at women - it's a feminine cigarette. You never met a guy who smoked menthol, unless they were gay.[204]

Whilst menthol smokers would often buy into the sophisticated image:

> Elegance is green and gold! Everything about it was elegant, really. The packaging, the look of the cigarette and the taste was just so smooth as well, like a fine wine or a good whisky. There's something very luxurious about the taste of a St Moritz. [205]

Some menthol smokers believed that the menthol element of the cigarette was genuinely 'better for them':

> There was a girl at work who smoked menthol cigarettes – she insisted that menthol cigarettes were good for your lungs, that the menthol counteracted what the tobacco was doing.[206]

> I think we used to smoke them when we had colds, thinking they would help your cold get better. I mean, how mad is that?[207]

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[203] 'Zach (1958)', 6.
[204] 'John (1971)', 6.
[205] 'Roxy (1968)', 6.
[206] 'Harry (1975)', 3.
[207] 'Michael (1959)', 6.

> It's not any fresher tasting. But you know, if you're gonna be kissing a boy...there's always something around mouth hygiene. So it was practical as well. But yes, definitely the fresher taste appealed. Because if you're a heavy smoker, you had all sorts of horrible colds and coughs, and they would linger, and you get much more congestion and phlegm. It's horrible, absolutely horrible. And sometimes, you know, if you wanted to smoke through that, you would get a mentholated cigarette.[208]

Subculture and youth theory infers but doesn't really explore individual identity in the same form as a post-modernist assessment. Studies of groups are relevant but interviewees suggested that the factors affecting individuals are what drove behaviour once the subcultural boundaries became blurred. Cigarettes were not only a key part of identity but were often front and centre for driving the identity – the badge was important and may even have formed part of a brand group that had commonality with its own subculture. Therefore, it was possible to be part of an identity group that could co-exist across other groups – interviewees talked of knowing and being drawn to fellow Marlboro or Silk Cut smokers, for instance, despite having different cultural styles. And within styles, a kind of brand-sub-subculture could exist, sometimes at a cultural level, and almost always at a transactional one. Interviewees shared More cigarettes only with other More smokers within a female group, for example. Male smokers could stick together; sticking with the same brands to reflect their nationalist alliance to a home or imagined group. Certain brands were associated with masculinity or femininity, and paralleled identity tropes such as strength or sophistication. The importance of these sub-subcultures is partly because full membership could be achieved without the necessity of the ritual and acceptance of a full subcultural membership. Smoking was, as Alison says in chapter four: 'about connecting with other people...being part of a shared group'.[209] Beyond a sub-

[208] 'Grace (1953)', 6.
[209] 'Alison (1969)', 5.

cultural membership, smokers could be self-defined by smoking a different cigarettes, such as John's Embassys in this chapter, or Nathan's Woodbines in chapter five, and literally making a statement of identity. At a time when mass consumption served to create subcultural styles with limited differentiation (sometimes intentionally, such as the on-trend casual labels), then smoking a different or unusual brand was often an effective way to address the dichotomy of fitting in against having a clear individualism. Throughout this chapter we have explored the relationship between smoking, brand and identity at an individual and group level. Even though brand selection may have been assertive to demonstrate an individualism, the ubiquity of smoking provided guard rails such that cigarette smoking in itself was effectively an indicator of ordinariness, and the next chapter considers this perspective.

3. ORDINARY PEOPLE, EVERYDAY SPACES: FAMILY INFLUENCES, CLASS ASSOCIATIONS AND ADOLESCENT TRANSITIONS

Smoking was never a status thing at all. I know it is part of the reasons why teenagers pick up smoking to be cool. I get that. It was just something that our family did. We smoked.[210]

In considering marketing and in particular brand development in the previous chapter, we asked questions of the effectiveness of marketing in an environment where many other factors were influencing the young smoker, from the point of initial introduction to the initiation and continuation of brand affiliation. The following chapters will examine those other influences, through the lenses of youth subculture, the development of identity, and finally, the perspective of addiction and reflection. In this chapter we will explore the nature of young people's experiences of ordinary life in Britain between 1975 and 2000, then examine what that meant in the context of smoking in a family, work or social environment.

Before we progress, it is worth considering the use of 'ordinary', 'everyday' and 'normal' in the context of this discussion. 'Normal' has a challenging context, although it was the word chosen most often by interviewees to describe their everyday culture. But 'normal' in the sense of class, age or gender culture means different things to different people. 'Everyday' is a safer description, although still needs qualification against a social group. 'Ordinary' is perhaps the

[210] 'Liam (1966)', 3.

most appropriate term to use, still needing qualification but addressing here a number of encompassing themes. I will use 'ordinary' to define not only what was ordinary for individuals (which may be different to 'ordinary' in previous or future generations), but also the ordinariness of smoking itself. 'Normalised' will be used on occasion, to describe a confirmation of a societal norm.

Essentially, interviewees saw themselves as ordinary people. What did this mean in an environment that retrospectively looked full of change? In conducting interviews, I was struck by the perceived and remembered ordinariness of the political and cultural environment, alongside the practice of cigarette smoking. At points, interviewees effectively linked multiple things together, to create stylistic statements that were both individual and providing a cultural (ordinary) fit. Although taking a bricolage approach to style with extraordinary objects and cultural references, they were still able to describe their worlds as ordinary insofar that they were not truly individual. A good example is in chapter two – an ostentatious club culture where the right cigarettes were paired with the right shirt, or where Marlboro Lights were a stylistic fashion statement in their own right. As John states: 'All the girls smelt of CK One and everyone was smoking Marlboro Lights.'[211] Could these sort of connections have been made at a 'mass' level so easily before the mid 1970s, before the advent of a neo-liberal political environment that encouraged monetary individualism, and the 'conscious rejection of the post-war 'consensus'?[212] For those people growing up between 1975 and 2000, it is important to consider that changes, whether they were social, cultural, political or economic were, in the moment, ordinary. Essentially, what was ordinary to young people from the 1970s onwards would have been seen as extraordinary in previous generations.

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[211] 'John (1971)', 5.
[212] Aled Rhys Davies et al., *The Neoliberal Age? Britain since the 1970s* (UCL press, 2021).

For some, an ordinary life was under the auspices of a return to the values of a previous generation, for example the nationalism supporting the Falklands campaign. For others, it was an inevitable split between the haves and the have nots, for example in the 1980s, when yuppie culture peaked alongside the real suffering of the dole queue and the miners' strike. And for still more, the ordinary was framed by a downward spiral of living conditions over which they had no control. This was particularly the case for young people – between 1979 and 1983, over 30% of 16-17 year olds were unemployed and claiming benefits:

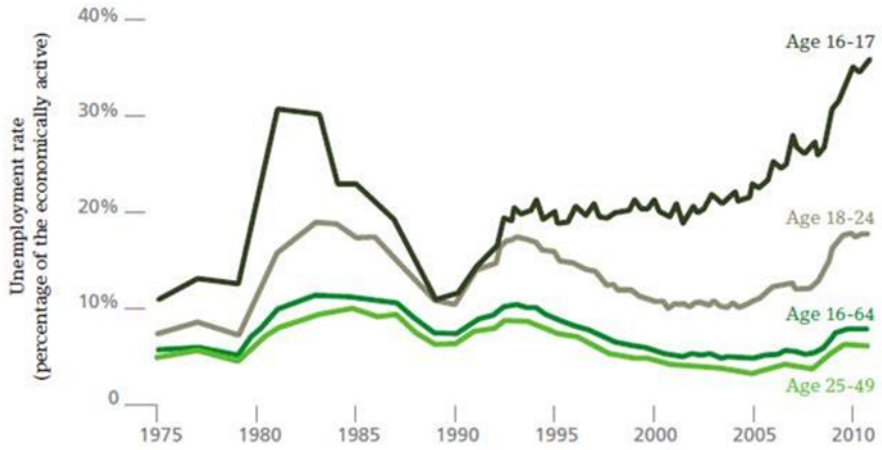

Figure 16 - Unemployment rates (1975-2010)
Labour Force Survey

Divisions that had barely existed before 1975 were clearly evident as neo-liberalism took hold – class division had blurred with monetary splits; high and low culture was firmly divided; there was a rise of both far-right and far-left activism, and a reduction in support for the liberal centre; there was clear economic division, with the principles of monetarist policy driving strategies even beyond the Conservative defeat in 1997. But this was the normality that was the lived experience. For those growing up during this time, there was plenty of change, but little comparison point, so the change became the norm. Interviewees saw little irony in the heavy handed or nefarious cigarette marketing of their time, because it was aligned with their own changing environment. The aspirational advertising rubbed shoulders with the stylistic, the practical and the value-led, all of which were traits of the new neo-liberalism. And most of the

advertising pointed to a support for badge marketing, where a brand could say something about the smoker, while co-existing in an ordinary environment:

Figure 17 - Rothmans (1975); John Player Red (1980); Embassy Regal (1983); Cartier (1981) History of Advertising Trust

Note the placement of ads in everyday publications: *Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping, News of The World, Sunday Times*.

Because of the alignment of 1975-2000 to a period defined as neo-liberal, it is easy to consider the acceptance of ordinariness defined by change as intrinsically linked to the political agenda. Clearly there were links, and the shift from the post-war consensus was significant, but there were many factors beyond neo-liberal politics that contributed to an environment that could combine extraordinary inputs to create ordinary lives.[213] Robinson et al consider some of these factors in the context of popular individualism, suggesting that this in the 1970s was a *cause* of Thatcherism – that changes in attitudes to marriage, divorce and parenthood values (ironically at odds with the Thatcherite dream of a return to Victorian values); the rise of social movements; the combination of mass consumption with a rejection of class-aligned voting, all contributed to a political change that offered an individualistic society.[214] And consequently, 'by the end of the 1970s, 'ordinariness' had been 'inscribed by Thatcher with a set of middle-class values masquerading as classlessness'.[215]

'Popular Individualism' was about 'having more autonomy and control than the non-political 'ordinary people' were felt to have had in the past' – it was a liberation from the traps of true ordinariness that allowed the extraordinary in, while still allowing an ordinary life to be lived at an individual level.[216] So ordinary for one person could be extraordinary for another – the multiple normalities that are explored through the words of our interviewees were ordinary only in the context of their own lived experience. Brooke describes this through different trajectories separate from Thatcherism – sexual and personal life, work and gender and European

[213] Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War*, Rev. ed, Pimlico (Series) 117 (Pimlico, 1994).
[214] Emily Robinson et al., 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the "crisis" of the 1970s', *Twentieth Century British History* 28, no. 2 (June 2017): 268–304.
[215] Robinson et al., 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the "crisis" of the 1970s'.
[216] Robinson et al., 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the "crisis" of the 1970s'.

integration. So there could be multiple definitions of ordinary, dependant on where the trajectory intersected with an individual.[217]

The first part of this chapter considers smoking as an ordinary and ubiquitous activity within early childhood memories, and sets the scene for the ordinariness, that surrounds activity in later recollections. I will next examine two areas that stand out as being newly accepted during this period, reflective of interviewee comment, and in addition to the themes explored by Robinson et al. Firstly, rebellion, which had in previous times stood out and been unaccepted and rejected in society, but by the 1970s, had begun to be understood as a part of the landscape of youth development. I will link this to the 'decline of deference' described by Robinson et al, not only in itself, but also as a reflection of the acceptance of this decline – by the late 1970s, the moral outrage that had defined so much coverage of earlier youth rebellion had significantly dissipated.[218] Secondly, the mass consumption options that became available from the 1970s made the tools for youth development much more accessible. Consumption based change was key to the development of all subculture, as we will see in the next chapter, but widespread availability to the key items for stylistic definition made movement within the parameters of ordinariness that much more feasible. The manner of consumption, which during this time took on new patterns of spending, was illustrated well by cigarette brands and badge marketing. It became normal to blur and challenge the lines between societal and economic signifiers. As the consumer society expanded, themes of conspicuous consumption and class alignment (such as wearing 'worker' brands or styles to display your credentials or sympathies) began to be available to all. This was true especially in strong badge products such as cigarettes, which at the time had little affordability bias between brands. So, just as Thatcher's

[217] Stephen Brooke, 'Living in "New Times": Historicizing 1980s Britain', *History Compass* 12, no. 1 (2014): 20–32.
[218] Robinson et al., 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the "crisis" of the 1970s'.

'no such thing as society' quote gave rise to debate about fluidity of organisation and society, smokers could affiliate themselves with working class brands such as Regal or ostentatious sophistication such as Cartier, for largely the same price. This fluidity of affiliation will be echoed in the following chapter on subcultures.

FAMILY LIFE: SURROUNDED BY SMOKE

In the meantime, we will return to the ubiquity of smoking itself, starting with the memories of how young people grew up in often smoke filled environments. It is important to reiterate how ubiquitous smoking was in the mid-1970s, and how accepted it was in British society. Acceptance fell away towards the end of the century, with full bans coming in for pubs and workplace environments in 2006 and 2007. But for many growing up in the 1970s, smoking was everywhere. Early social memories are dominated by a remembered fug of smoke in the air:

> So from my very premature birth, up to whenever I left home, I was surrounded by smoke fog. And one of my earliest memories is we used to go to a social club on a Friday night, which is what the working class folks did. And the smoke was so thick and heavy that I used to have to go and wash my face in the toilet to try and get rid of it. My eyes were just streaming.[219]

Smoke was in the home, and is key to family memory:

> 'My granddad was ridiculous. He light one up in the morning and light his next fag off it, and the next one and the next one... My grandma – it was more of a relaxation thing. 'We'll have a fag at five' was her catch phrase.'[220]

[219] 'Grace (1953)', 1.
[220] 'Ian (1972)', 1.

> ‘My granddad smoked roll ups. Most of the adults smoked. Some of our babysitters smoked. My uncle smoked. The Akela and some of the leaders at our cub group smoked during cub meetings!’[221]

The normality and ordinariness is striking in hindsight:

> Father was Irish, London mother, both smoked very heavily. She had pneumonia, nearly died, so stopped, I don't actually remember her smoking. My father continued to smoke until he died. Two heart attacks and carried on smoking again even after the second one and died after the third one aged 67. I always remember him smoking. I remember ashtrays in the house, a fog of smoke.[222]

We will explore individual and group identity in future chapters, but we should also be aware of identity within and of the family:

> My father was a smoker. We were all smokers, all nine of us. My father passed at 51of a coronary thrombosis, but his family background, his family history had a history of heart attacks. But it kind of makes me think you know. He always smoked Benson and Hedges. And then me and my two brothers and my sisters, we smoked. We’d never smoke in front of him because you know, we're from that background. We never smoked in front of him at all, but we’re all smokers.[223]

These early influences determined not just whether young people started to smoke, but gave some early opportunities for brand affinity:

> Where I grew up and the company I kept, the big brand for them was Benson and Hedges for some reason. It was always Bensons. They all smoked Benson and Hedges. The

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[221] Kurt (1969), 1.
[222] ‘Nathan (1959)’, 1.
[223] ‘Liam (1966)’, 1.

> background my friends had was mainly an Asian background so obviously, like me, they never smoked in front of their parents. And they would never smoke at home, either. In an Asian background, no one smoked at home – they'd smoke outside. And that's how a lot of the young lads my age used to be – there was 10 Bensons in their coat pocket. And it was always Benson and Hedges. It was all Bensons. No one smoked Lights or menthol, Lambert and Butler or Marlboro. My brothers were young and cool. My brother was in the army. My brother Mickey was so cool and yeah, I just thought that's a bit cooler because they're smoking it. And I just stayed with it. Even though my friends smoked Bensons, I stayed with Embassy.[224]

For all the (often unintended) parental influence that encouraged the young smoker, it was often important to not take on the brand of a previous generation:

> I think I was the only one of all my friends that smoked Embassy. Everyone else was Bensons. Looking back, I think if my brother's smoked Bensons, I probably would have stayed with it. I might have thought that Bensons are for people like my dad, I don't know.[225]

SCHOOL: MEANWHILE, BEHIND THE BIKE SHEDS

Identity development can exist within a state of ordinariness, the necessary exploration could take place at an early stage, and could be a core part of development during school years:

> You became part of a social group that went to a certain place for cigarettes, whether it be the bike sheds, or the mobiles or down the copse and it was also a way of kind of

[224] 'Liam (1966)', 4.
[225] 'Liam (1966)', 4.

> furthering your status, because inevitably, you will be coming into contact with the more powerful kids in the school.[226]

Cigarette smoking at school, often allowed the transfer between the process of starting to smoke into what Lloyd et al refer to as 'hesitant smoking': [227]

> It's just occasional. It's not often and then it becomes a habit, when a couple of girls that say 'come with us' and we start smoking behind the bike sheds and I find my people, which is rebellious girls, to hang out with and that seemed like the place I wanted to be, so it was a social gateway. A reason to hang out with girls. The boys are off beating each other up, playing football and I still like playing football, but I don't like the beating each other up part. And these girls are just more interesting and fun than most of my friends. So that's when it becomes a real daily habit.[228]

The ordinariness of smoking could easily coexist with teenage identity:

> I was actually obsessed with smoking at school. That's what I did to the expense of anything else, really. Maybe I wasn't addicted then, but there were certain times, you'd be waiting for the bus. You'd go into the park before school and then you'd wait till break time and sneak out and have one. Then with the excitement that you're going to get either caught by a teacher or dobbed in by somebody else. And there's all the thrill of where you're going to hide them.[229]

Group identity was often as important as individual identity. The segregation of smokers and non-smokers had resultant social consequences:

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[226] 'Adam (1961)', 2.
[227] Barbara Lloyd and Kevin Lucas, *Smoking in Adolescence: Images and Identities* (Routledge, 2014).
[228] 'John (1971)', 2.
[229] 'Victor (1965)', 2.

> I do remember at school you'd maybe get a kind of dorky kid. And to get in with the cool kids, they would start smoking, so it was a form of entryism as well. And in the 80s for someone not to have smoked, it would have been as weird as for somebody not to drink. There were definitely people who smoked and didn't smoke. In the 80s, people would either be into music or into sport, namely football. And so there were these two very separate social groupings. And always kind of regarded the folk who were just into sport as a bit dull. It was only really with Blur and Oasis and stuff like that in the late 80s, where football and music began to coalesce. But you'd always regard folk who didn't smoke as a bit dull, it was 'why don't you smoke, so you can run the fucking 200 metres faster?' Who wants to do that?[230]

ADOLESCENT TRANSITION

Part of the driving factor in moving towards identity achievement is the desire to move away from adolescence into adulthood. Many of the interviewees associated smoking with being grown up, as opposed to growing up:

> Upstairs on the bus, that was definitely a cool thing - at school you'd always go and sit in the back of the bus and sneak a cigarette. I did always enjoy smoking. I'm glad I gave up, but it was like rite of passage, for people our age. It was an adult thing to do, and you wanted to be accepted as an adult early as possible, didn't you? [231]

> It's what adults did, so there was an easy way of identifying you. If that was the belief amongst young people at the time, I don't know. It would seem so. Where I was getting

[230] 'Bob (1969)', 12.
[231] 'Dave (1962)', 10.

> my information from is that if you wanted to appear older and more mature than your years then smoking was the best way to go.[232]

The influence of others, in and out of the peer group, is key to the development of identity. In many cases, this will influence not just starting to smoke, but how to smoke, including the brand which in this case inferred a class association:

> I stopped smoking Dunhill International and went to ordinary Dunhill, because someone at a gig, when I got my cigarettes out, said 'What are you smoking those for?', and it was almost the reverse of what I was doing. It was like 'Are you some stuck up kid?'- you know, from a private school, because a lot of the time they would assume that they were my parents cigarettes that I brought with me. Again, I'm not sure where I got them from. But yes, I went to just ordinary Dunhills after that.[233]

Beyond the general social exposure to cigarettes and tobacco, more immediate impact came in the form of friends and family. A 2021 government study stated that children whose parents smoked were four times more likely to take up smoking than those whose parents did not.[234] In some cases, parents and grandparents were the instigators:

> It was so much part of the mainstream culture that my nan, whose husband had died, encouraged me to smoke. Well, not encourage me, but she was quite happy that I was smoking. She thought that was all part of me growing up, becoming a man.[235]

The normalisation of cigarette smoking, for some, led to a childish fascination that led to play, ahead of actually starting to smoke:

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[232] 'Pete (1967)', 1.
[233] 'Adam (1961)', 4.
[234] 'Children Whose Parents Smoke Are 4 Times as Likely to Take up Smoking Themselves', GOV.UK, accessed 6 June 2024, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-whose-parents-smoke-are-four-times-as-likely-to-take-up-smoking-themselves.
[235] 'Will (1966)', 2.

> I've got a photograph of me when I must have been about seven, there was a visitor from America who smoked roll ups and he showed me how to make roll ups, which I found really, really fascinating. And then I used to go and buy roll up papers from local tobacconist and just make roll ups using the herbs we had in the kitchen and grass and moss and leaves. I was just really, really obsessed with making roll ups.[236]

Brands were important early on for most interviewees, including the desire to keep away from 'old' or parental brands; we'll see later how brand associations moved around depending on time and individual situation:

> There were cigarettes which were they were disregarded as they were cigarettes which were what my dad smoked. They were Dad fags. And JPS were Granny fags. Silk Cut were basically girls fags, but then all the guys started smoking them.[237]

> I wasn't looking particularly for a strong cigarette or anything else. It was just that seemed to be the thing which was fashionable at the time, I suppose. They weren't things that someone pinched out of their mum's handbag. You know, Embassy Cadets or Peter Stuyvesant or Silk Cut or Rothmans or any of those Benson and Hedges, which all seemed a bit staid. I think Marlboro must have to us at least have seemed to be relatively new on the scene.[238]

> Yeah, I don't even know whether it really was a Marlboro that Marlon Brando smoked in The Wild One. But to me in my head, it was certainly Marlboro, and it was in all those 50s and 60s rebel youth films. And American ones, I've always assumed were Marlboro. It

[236] 'Bob (1969)', 1.
[237] 'Bob (1969)', 5.
[238] 'Bill & Clare (1961, 1962)', 5.

> was a bit different – Marlboro wasn't in my parents' generation. It was a cool cigarette that my parents didn't smoke.[239]
>
> I always thought (Benson & Hedges) were for my Dad's age group. Then, as I said, all my friends, when we became financially independent, all of them to a person smoked Bensons so looking back at it, I think it was you've become of age. That might have been the feeling that I'm old enough, so I smoke Bensons. I'm presuming that was because a lot of our parents, if they did smoke, smoked Bensons.[240]

In order for a young person to start smoking, certain factors needed to be in place. These would typically include availability, privacy from authority, and a social environment that included either encouragement or coercion. For most of the interviewees, this happened during their school days, when social pressures to fit in was particularly strong. Availability, privacy and social environment all feature in memories of how young people transitioned into smokers:

> And one of the guys, I can't remember his real name, but he was known as Breeze, started bringing along a pack of 10 Number Six in the mornings and offering one to each of us for a penny. This was around '73, '74. I don't know where he got the cigarettes from, but I presume from his parents or something. And he then became a regular supplier to everyone for a penny a cigarette, or 10p for a pack, or 20p if you wanted to push the boat out![241]
>
> So we went, shall we give this a go? It was a 10 pack of John Player Special fags and that's where we started. It was kind of force yourself to like it. I suppose it was a bit of rebellion, initially. And that's how I started smoking from there really. And it was just a

[239] 'Dave (1962)', 6.
[240] 'Liam (1966)', 7.
[241] 'Adam (1961)', 2.

> thing that was done. All the cool kids smoked, well, everybody smoked, to be fair - cool kids or not.[242]

Most 'first cigarettes' tasted horrible; the pressure to become a smoker needed to outweigh the initial feelings: 'When you actually start you have to put a bit of work in 'cause it's not particularly pleasant.'[243]

> You got to get through how horrible the first few fags are, haven't you? It doesn't come naturally. And I guess a lot of people would have done that and thought that this is a crap idea.[244]

For some, the transition was a natural one, although less so in retrospect:

> All my friends smoked, so we never really questioned whether it was wrong or right. It was just natural. When I think back at it now, it was really weird. We never questioned it. It was just 'You want a cigarette?' 'Yeah'. 'Have you got any?' Or let's go to the shops and get some cigarettes.[245]

Certain brands were remembered as 'starter cigarettes', if they were available, and perceived as less unpleasant to smoke. Players Number Six were a popular first choice: 'I remember they came in 10s...that's how I started as well. Because, they're quite short and they come in 10's and they're quite cheap.'[246] The perception of smoking as a 'cool' activity seemed less important to interviewees than evidencing a transition to adulthood. And the process of educating oneself into how to smoke was also key:

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[242] 'Ian (1972)', 1.
[243] Kurt (1969), 2.
[244] 'Michael (1959)', 9.
[245] 'Liam (1966)', 2.
[246] 'Nathan (1959)', 4.

> And when I was a kid, I thought that smoking was just something you did when you were a grown up, you know and I couldn't wait to try it. I think my first cigarette was probably when I stole cigarettes from a friend of my grandmother's, I figured if I took a couple, she wouldn't notice. And then I stole one, and then I tried to smoke it. But it tasted so disgusting and made me cough and I didn't really know how to do it. Of course, I didn't understand about inhaling it, just that you set fire to it and sort of puffed it and it was disgusting. But I wasn't going to be put off by something like that - I really wanted to do it.[247]

The blurring between smoking as a symbol of being 'grown up' against that of being cool, clarifies a little, once the habit becomes little more established. There are some simple explanations for why people smoked:

> Cause everybody did. It's one of these things, probably no greater explanation for it. Like why did you start listening to music? I've thought about that before, but I mean, then everybody smoked. Plus, you think you're a bit tough. I got into punk very early, so all my mates were punks, all my mates smoked. All the cool folk at school smoked, it was only the wankers who didn't smoke at school.[248]

> With hindsight, what would have been more preferable was by finding out what my peers smoked and copying them. But that's too easy. So, I had to go off and find it out for myself. Find out how to smoke. And I think I found it quite hard work, learning how to inhale, I probably smoked for a good amount of time without really knowing how to do it. Imagining than I was, but not actually doing it, not taking it fully down into my lungs.[249]

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[247] 'Oscar (1960)', 1.
[248] 'Bob (1969)', 2.
[249] 'Pete (1967)', 1.

The second transition that interviewees spoke of was the point at which they started buying cigarettes. Most of the early cigarettes that interviewees talked about were not necessarily bought at all:

> My family, both grandfathers were pipe smokers. We saw them quite a lot. So I was surrounded by Whiskey Flake in a green tin, which was very exciting. He used to smoke in the car with the window shut. And my dad smoked a pipe when I was a kid, but then stopped. And we'd be around people's houses where there would be 50 JPS blacks in a tub, which again was so cool. The best thing is you could nick them because there was 50 of them. So I was primed to take up the hobby.[250]

From 1908 to 2007, the legal age limit for buying cigarettes in the UK was 16. In practice, that law was largely ignored in the 1970s and 80s by a large number of retailers. Many shops were comfortable working outside the law:

> Most shops didn't sell them, but our local sweet shop did, and you had to go in and ask for three 'cough candies' and he'd stick them in a little paper bag like the ones you'd buy your penny sweets in. Mad.[251]

And if shops weren't available, then there were often other ways of buying:

> When you're very young, there are certain shops which would sell you cigarettes. But shops round about where the school was had obviously been told by the cops not to sell cigarettes to folk who were obviously 7, 8, 9 years old. So you'd get them from cigarette machines. And another thing, I don't know if this was just a purely Scottish thing, is we used to have ice cream vans, which would go around the street and used to sell you for

[250] 'Victor (1965)', 1.
[251] 'Will (1966)', 9.

> about 10p, a small cigarette, an Embassy Cub or a Kensitas or a Number Six; one cigarette.[252]
>
> And you could buy singles in pubs. And in some cafes as well for school kids, some cafes would sell you a single cigarette. And I think those were quite common, single cigarettes. For when people [were] on the way home from school. Hard to believe it, really.[253]

The majority of interviewees described starting to smoke in the context of assertion within a group of peers. For others, it was something to try, practice and establish, in private, including the initial purchase:

> There's that kind of image, isn't there - all the cool kids smoke. There's that signaling association, but I was never really overt about it, you know? So when I started to smoke, I didn't go into the smoking corners at school where the other kids went in the school day. I didn't want to be in with the smokers, as it were, but at the same time I wanted to be a smoker.... I can't remember starting from being offered a cigarette; I remember it being a more autonomous thing. I thought I'm gonna go off and try this, so I went and bought some cigarettes, and then just smoked them. And I remember they cost me 42½p for 10. And they were Silk Cut and that's what I've smoked ever since.[254]

We will return to the themes triggered by subcultural and societal development in the context of 'no such thing as society' in further chapters. The reality of life in Britain was that there were still groups of belonging and support, not least in the context of class. And symbols of class and

[252] 'Bob (1969)', 5.
[253] 'Michael (1959)', 6.
[254] 'Roxy (1968)', 1.

society were evident in both cigarette smoking and in specific brands. For Liam, cigarette smoking was an integral part of his societal position:

> I was born in Northwest London, which is largely populated by an ethnic minority community, West Indian background. Big drinkers, big smokers... from the age of 12, me and my friends were dabbling with cigarettes... we'd get someone to go in the shop to buy us them. Left school, 16, 17. 10 fags would last. I'm smoking 10 fags a week then and when I started work then I started buying 10 fags a day and then by the time I was 18,19 I was on 20 cigarettes a day, and it was quite normal then...It was part of the furniture. It wasn't a status thing, it was just smoking. We had parties, you know, two days worth of drinking and smoking. And we'd wake up in the morning as a young child and the place was just stank of smoke, you know? It was a great childhood, but that's how it was.[255]

CLASS AND FRIENDSHIP

For some, brand was an important alignment of belonging, in line with an adolescent searching for class identity:

> Number Six are another relentlessly proletarian brand. I've never seen a middle class person apart from me smoking a Players Number Six...That is the brand of the working class grandmother, I think.[256]

> I went to Sheffield in 1995 to do my degree, and I would smoke Bensons then. But for some reason - it's the weirdest thing - to try and blend in with the local populace, because there used to be a myth that went round that the locals hated the students, and

[255] 'Liam (1966)', 2.
[256] 'Steve (1961)', 6.

> if you stood out too much as an outsider, you get your head kicked in, I started noticing that Regals were quite a local fag. So I gave them a try but I didn't go full time into Regals, I sort of bounced between Bensons and Regals.[257]

> You probably associate certain brands with certain people...I always thought that (John Player Special) was the working men's cigarette. You're at work. They'll pull them out and you'll think 'has anyone got anything a bit nicer?'. Maybe the John Player thing was done for me by the time I left school - associated with Number Six and Number Ten - not the sort of brand you want to be near.[258]

> My friend group in London were sort of sort of drag queenie. And they didn't smoke roll ups, they were a bit too common. And my friends would smoke Lambert and Butler 'cause they were cheap, and Superkings. So there was very much this idea that what you smoked said a lot about you, and roll ups were about authenticity and a little bit rougher round the edges and slightly working class.[259]

For others, there was more of an observational aspect to how cigarettes and society were aligned:

> (Players Number Six) used to be short fags. I think you could get them in tens. So you did sometimes end up smoking them. They weren't terrible. And the little Embassys were the same. And I'm associating them with old people. Old working class people.[260]

> (Marlboro were) unequivocally, a middle class cigarette. I knew a lot of working class boys, none of them ever smoked Marlboro. Marlboro Red...was the most popular brand

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[257] 'Ian (1972)', 3.
[258] 'Michael (1959)', 7.
[259] 'Alison (1969)', 3.
[260] 'Will (1966)', 5.

> at my boarding school. Posh, 16 year old boys who smoked in that time in Sussex, would have been on the Marlboros all day long. That Red Marlboro brand to me is very much what you'd expect to see middle class people in Surrey smoking.[261]

> Embassy Regal was a chav cigarette! I didn't know anyone who smoke Regal until much later actually. It did tend to have that connotation with it – a bit chav-ey. Scallies, in Liverpool.[262]

The class alignment to the length of the cigarette still held after the historical reasons had been forgotten. Shorter cigarettes were smoked by working class people as they could be smoked quickly as a fix during a short break. Longer (and King Size) cigarettes were introduced more for people who had the luxury of time to enjoy them at leisure – consequently they tended to be slightly more expensive. And even if these different approaches to smoking were muddled for the young smoker, the connotations were still there. And there was also an element of an inverted snobbery, both in practice and in observation:

> I guess that that would be an element of kind of snobbism there 'cause the soul boys would be smoking Embassy Regals - functional smoking without any irony to it. [263]

> So for me, coming from the posh end (of the town), but running the gauntlet of the of the unposh end, smoking was helpful. I could maintain my arty punk credentials through smoking, but also in terms of it being a transaction. You also have something in common with the people that would want to kick your head in otherwise. There was an element of elitism in there as well, 'cos I saw myself as smoking the really cool fags.[264]

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[261] 'Steve (1961)', 6.
[262] 'Roxy (1968)', 5.
[263] 'Victor (1965)', 4.
[264] 'Victor (1965)', 3.

Interviewees saw a normalised support for their new habit from a class perspective, and this continued into, and beyond, adolescence as the smoking habit was cemented further. The social environments that young people operated within were largely accepting of the smoker. As young people made friends, or developed their interests in music, drinking, or sport, so they were often accompanied by a cigarette:

> Most of us really enjoyed smoking…I know I did, and I couldn't imagine sitting with a pint or being at a gig without having a cigarette…and I probably made more friends than I would have had I not smoked. And probably more interesting friends because, a lot of the time, the more interesting people I knew were the smokers[265]

> One of the nice things about having a packet of fags is you've always got something to do. You've always got a conversation type thing as well, haven't you, which is always useful if you're out and about on your own. So that's always helpful. [266]

> So smoking was absolutely for me about connecting with other people, about having a fag, being part of a shared group and that division between smokers and non-smokers, particularly when you could still smoke indoors and at work. Even now, I go to the smoking area because that's where all the interesting people are.[267]

Depending on the social environment, young smokers might choose their brand carefully according to the nature of the event:

> There were a lot of cheaper brands like Lambert and Butler and people were much less touchy about that, but going out to night clubs and going out to pubs going out on the

[265] 'Adam (1961)', 17.
[266] 'Eddie (1970)', 3.
[267] 'Alison (1969)', 5.

> pull, you had your Benson and Hedges to stay classy, but in the rave scene it didn't matter if you're smoking cheap fags.[268]

For some, the branding of the cigarette worked in tandem with other branding, but within the context of a social environment:

> This was at the height of the Marlboro Lights craze as well. You know, to be cool, you had to smoke Marlboro Lights, but I always felt they were a bit for the posers. It was the Calvin Klein One aftershave, the Marlboro Lights. You know, the Ralph Lauren shirt not tucked in and all that kind of thing.[269]

Alongside normalisation in social settings, the work environment allowed and, to an extent, encouraged smoking:

> Everybody smoked at work. There were ashtrays provided in work, which was in safeguarding child protection. High, high stress work. And heavy, heavy smoking was de riguer in the work group.[270]

> I worked at Norwich Union for a bit, and they'd have a 10 minute fag break in the morning, and I'd think, 'If I don't go out for a fag, I'm not going to get a break', and I found myself smoking more and more.[271]

The ban on enclosed workplace smoking didn't take effect until 2007, alongside the ban in pubs. Many offices and workplaces had introduced voluntary bans before then, but most allowed smokers to take cigarette breaks well into the 2000s. There was a gradual growth of non-smoking areas in the UK – main post offices became non-smoking in 1979, London

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[268] Kurt (1969), 3.
[269] 'Ian (1972)', 3.
[270] 'Grace (1953)', 3.
[271] 'Harry (1975)', 2.

transport banned smoking on the underground in 1985, and, after the Kings Cross fire in 1981, from all stations. Virgin Atlantic (1995) and British Airways (1998) banned smoking on all flights.[272]

IGNORING THE SIGNS

Considering Lopez et al's stage model of smoking epidemic in developed countries (establishment; rapid prevalence, decline and industry response; denormalisation), Hoek et al consider the factors in the second phase.[273] They cite three main drivers: technological innovation, marketing to specific populations, and 'social environments (that) accommodated and validated smoking as an accepted practice', continuing to describe the environmental factors: 'During this phase, widespread product availability, reduced product costs and sophisticated marketing embedded smoking as a social practice. Brands served as language evolved to reinforce smoking's normativity and prevalence grew rapidly as smoking was carried within social networks.'[274] Lopez et al describe prevalence during the second stage as facilitated partly because 'Tobacco control policies are generally not well developed…in part because the risks of tobacco use may still not be widely understood.'[275] Where the health issues were mentioned during interviews, they were very much overshadowed by normalisation:

> My mother busted me when I was about 14. I got the lectures and I got a right bollocking when I got home, you know, and then within about 3 weeks, she was offering me cigarettes. She'd really guilt trip me, she'd say 'oh to think of your beautiful virgin lungs

[272] Barbara Lloyd and Lucas, *Smoking in Adolescence*, 21.
[273] A. D. Lopez, N. E. Collishaw, and T. Piha, 'A Descriptive Model of the Cigarette Epidemic in Developed Countries', *Tobacco Control* 3, no. 3 (September 1994): 242–47.
[274] Janet Hoek, Richard Edwards, and Andrew Waa, 'From Social Accessory to Societal Disapproval: Smoking, Social Norms and Tobacco Endgames', *Tobacco Control* 31, no. 2 (1 March 2022): 358–64.
[275] Lopez et al., 'A Descriptive Model of the Cigarette Epidemic in Developed Countries', 244.

> being corrupted by smoke. It breaks my heart'. And then like I say, within a few weeks she was offering me cigarettes.[276]

For Alison, brought up in New Zealand, where the messages around smoking were more mature and vocal, the pressure to de-normalise came from the younger members of the family:

> So we were hearing all the time about how smoking was terrible, and myself and my brother, my brother's three years younger than me, we would get really upset and say, 'please stop smoking'. And we used to ask them to not smoke in the car as well because I remember that feeling of being in the back seat of a car without the windows open and this fog of smoke, feeling really sick, I can still taste it in my mouth. [277]

REBELLION

Two themes emerged from the interpretation of normality in interviewee responses. The first was the theme of rebellion, which was seen as a normal part of growing up, and intrinsically linked to smoking. Notwithstanding the social acceptance and normalisation of cigarette smoking, interviewees were clear that smoking could also operate as an act of rebellion. Hebdige sees this in the context of subcultural style:

> ...objects are made to mean and mean again as 'style' in subculture ... it ends in the construction of a style, in a gesture of defiance or contempt, in a smile or a sneer. It signals a Refusal.[278]

But the rebellion in our time period was softer and safer than previous generations. Partly, the ordinariness of smoking meant that it was less impact as a rebellious act, but the combination

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[276] 'Oscar (1960)', 2.
[277] 'Alison (1969)', 1.
[278] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (Routledge, 2012), 3.

of migration to a form of classlessness and the 'decline of deference' described by Robinson et al mean that young people had to work pretty hard to bring any element of shock to their elders.[279] Instead, the acts of rebellion could take place within relatively safe parameters, in keeping with the ordinary life. Cigarette smoking is a great example of this safe rebellion – in an environment where smoking was common, cigarettes could be smoked surreptitiously at home and ostentatiously away from parents; if you were caught smoking then the consequences wouldn't necessarily be too drastic, but for interviewees it was an essential accessory to a style persona.

Part of the rebellion was to kick against the legal position on smoking:

> This is very much a UK thing... it's quite clear that under a certain age you're not allowed. But it's just at that age, because they tell you, that doing things that you're not allowed becomes cool. So to me, I don't know whether I saw for the first time the photograph of Keith Richards smoking a cigarette with the sign saying no smoking, before being in the position of wondering whether to smoke. But that's part of my judgment of what's cool or not cool.[280]

All of the interviewees initially hid their smoking from their parents or carers, although in many cases it was important, as a statement of identity, to be more ostentatious around their peer group; the nature of smoking thus became ordinary within the group, but separate to a dominant culture:

> When I started at 14 in 1974, you know, we didn't really know how to rebel. It was only when 1977 came along, we all became punk rockers and we all started rebelling. And

[279] Robinson et al., 'Telling Stories about Post-War Britain: Popular Individualism and the "crisis" of the 1970s'.
[280] 'Tom (1962)', 2.

> then of course, you know, hanging around in your gang, with some punk rockers, if any old ladies were going past just blowing the smoke in her face just being horrible. So it was all part of that rebellion thing. But punk rock at the age of 16, 17 wasn't all about politics, it was about posing and the cigarette was part of the pose.[281]
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> I suppose it's that rebellious thing, isn't it? You're told not to. So you rebel. I mean, I always thought that when you have signs to say no ball games where you play football, no smoking signs with cigarette burns in them. So I guess it's a way of showing that you're rebellious, you're not conforming as a teenager, isn't it? And then it becomes something else, you're not as consciously rebelling, but you're trying to stand out in the crowd a bit, where everyone's smoking.[282]
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> I once got grassed up when I was walking back from the school bus by someone's mother who drove by and I was smoking a cigarette, walking back to my folks house and she grassed up to the school so I think we'd always try and hide our smoking in social situations where you were liable to incite the censure of adults, but while we were within our own peer groups, we certainly have smoked in a much more ostentatious manner.[283]

For some, the rebellion was a phase that gave way to acceptance and a perception of sophistication. We can tie this into some of the earlier comments about brand rebellion, whereby, in a smoking normalized environment, the rebellion becomes using a brand different to that of your parents:

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[281] 'Frank (1960)', 4.
[282] 'Michael (1959)', 9.
[283] 'Bob (1969)', 2.

> In the very early days 76, 77, when I was 12 years old, certainly then, I was rebelling and not doing what my mum and dad wanted, but not in my late teens. It was very glamorous, really cool. Now it looks ridiculous.[284]

In the search for identity, influences came in the form of different rebellious models:

> And then my sister, who was one of the early punks…she started smoking aged 17 in 76, 77 and I'd go into her bedroom, listen to The Clash, The Sex Pistols, and I'd smoke with her… there's certainly an element of rebellion, you know, because she looked like nobody else had ever looked before; her friends did as well. And I have to say as well, I always thought it looked very, very glamorous. I always thought The Clash, The Sex Pistols looked good smoking. Seeing photographs of guys with fags in their hands was amazing for me. Siouxsie Sue in particular, was very, very glamorous.[285]

> What hooked me in was seeing the punk groups in the mid 70s in the NME smoking. They'd have cigarettes in their hands and because it looked rebellious, it looked cool. Cause you never saw that in regular magazines or you'd never see anyone holding a cigarette unless it was James Dean or whatever.[286]

For Grace, the rebellion came slightly later, as she exchanged a non-smoking position within a smoking family tribe for a new college group:

> I think I probably inhaled enough with secondary smoke, but I hung off until I went to college before I smoked myself and it was actually the social pressures at college that induced me to smoke - in a way, you know, I was rebelling against my family. Everything stank. It was, you know, vile. But it was actually this social anxiety, pressures of being

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[284] 'Nathan (1959)', 3.
[285] 'Nathan (1959)', 1.
[286] 'Nathan (1959)', 5.

> the first to go to university. And the desire to belong to this very strange alien tribe of white middle class people was very strong. So I started when I was nineteen.[287]

For others, the rebellion was focused against particular brands - there is a theme throughout many of the interviews of ensuring that rebellion took place against the parental choice of brand :

> And there were ones that I would never want to have smoked or bought. I didn't like the look of them. And even though I don't remember thinking it was cool or uncool, there must have been some part of me that knew that your mum or your auntie or whoever smoked them. But I wouldn't never have bought Embassy, and there were things like Benson and Hedges which we never bought.[288]

The theme of rebellion defined what being a smoker meant, at least to the smoker him/herself:

> So for non-smokers, it was very much very polarised and for us it was 'yeah, we're smokers. Yeah, we're addicted. We're addicted. We're going to die early, but you know, hey ho, life is short. And non-smokers were seen as a bit sort of puritanical, really... You know, life's hard, and then you die and you know that as a smoker.[289]

> I vaguely remember in my early smoking career meeting people who thought smoking was disgusting and rejecting them out of hand. [290]

And smoking could follow rebellious thinking, rather than the other way around:

> And I was quite anti-smoking, but also at the age of 12, 13, I started listening to punk music, I started going out and I started to develop this idea of, that when I grew up, I was

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[287] 'Grace (1953)', 2.
[288] 'Bill & Clare (1961, 1962)', 7.
[289] 'Grace (1953)', 7.
[290] 'Zach (1958)', 1.

> going to be somebody who was rebellious. I could tell that from the age of about 12. Looking back there was this fascination with subcultures and music and that underworld. And so smoking was just part of that. There wasn't any negotiation about it, if you wanted to be in any way, anti-establishment, rebellious or whatever.[291]

> I got a scholarship to a direct grant school… the school's purpose in the past had been to educate the thick sons of Essex farmers and members of the military who were overseas. So, I was instantly cast as a rebel, although I didn't feel particularly like it. And smoking was rebellion…and I was caned for aiding and abetting people smoking at some point. At which point I thought, well I might as well, in that case…And so it's an act of rebellion, but it's also about being cool. Being 'cool' is your armour in a hostile world when you're a teenager. And cool and rebellion tend to go hand in hand at that age.[292]

Smoking in itself would not be the only signal of rebellion, but for some, the consequences of smoking started to form an identity in the round:

> Maybe I was smoking for a cause. It was completely entwined with punk rock, being an anarchist, whatever that was, hating most things about my childhood and my family and the fucking village I lived in. General adolescent stuff, of which tobacco was a brilliant kind of panacea for… interestingly, it perpetuated the outsideness because it kept you skint, you had to sneak around smoking, and you had to nick the money to get the fags. So it was a perfect cycle.[293]

I asked Roxy if rebellion was the trigger for her first cigarette purchase:

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[291] 'Alison (1969)', 1.
[292] 'Zach (1958)', 1.
[293] 'Victor (1965)', 4.

> Yeah, completely. I never really fitted in at school, I really hated it. School was tailored towards the mass rather than the individual. I didn't feel that I was probably nurtured…I just wanted everyone to fuck off, basically! I was very rebellious. I just didn't like the system - I was quite arty. And quite unusual, I suppose, the way I dressed and the music I liked. [294]

For others, the sense of rebellion lasted well into their adult smoking careers; the rebellion had become part of an identity that identified smoking as an anti-societal theme:

> Final day before the smoking ban came in pubs, I'm smoking at the bar. I made this big flag to put in the ashtray 'Freedom? There ain't no fucking freedom'. So yes, I think I'm still a rebel at heart. But that's definitely why I started and why I didn't want to give up.[295]

> I also think there's a little bit of rebellion in me there still. And I know the smoking thing was that you were a rebel because you smoked and all that kind of thing. But I think as an awkward 50 year old as I as I am now, I think there's still a lack of bit of a rebel and the more the nanny state pushes down on you and said you shouldn't do this, the more you're going to carry on.[296]

Pete's reflection on rebellion was that it would have been more rebellious in the 70's, in an environment of normalisation, to rebel by not smoking, and to rebel in contemporary times by smoking. But the reality is that, especially for adolescents, smoking has consistently been associated with rebellion; in the sense of rebellion being about choosing style over sense:

> It seems silly now because obviously it's more rebellious not to smoke. The whole straight edge thing seems far more rebellious now to me than this kind of like, you know,

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[294] 'Roxy (1968)', 2.
[295] 'Dave (1962)', 5.
[296] 'Ian (1972)', 6.

> getting as smashed as possible. But you don't make that connection without hindsight.[297]

Clearly, it was possible for the normalisation of cigarette smoking to coexist with rebellion, especially at a time when society's expectation (and acceptance) was that adolescence should contain elements of rebellion anyway.

CONSUMPTION

The second topic emerging from interviewee responses was around consumption, a theme allowed and encouraged by the changing socio political environment. It seems incongruous that consumption should be feted as a positive trait in a society where so much of the population was struggling to survive, but the reach of media, marketing and brand didn't necessarily recognise this divide. And interviewees accepted that branding could reflect both aspiration and class, and were comfortable for both themes to coexist. Consumption in fact allowed an escape at a reasonable cost for some, and brands would be used despite, or even because of their association outside a peer group. Cartier, a brand that associated with conspicuous consumption, was used in an environment that was far from being defined by wealth:

> But it's just a pure kind of pretention. And also there was an element of post modernity and irony to that as well. You knew it was ridiculous, you knew that it wasn't really cool to be smoking Cartiers. But that kind of made it funny and kind of made it cool. Although if you were out somewhere with all your mates and you pulled out a box of Cartier, you might get a few sniggers.[298]

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[297] 'Pete (1967)', 3.
[298] 'Bob (1969)', 6.

In the same way that Burberry was adopted by casual culture, adopting a symbolic brand from a separate class, brands like Cartier, or Fribourg and Treyer were repurposed, alongside other symbols, playing into Hebdige's normalization through bricolage and resistance. But in all of the pretention, there was always the danger of overstating the ambition:

> And I think if you bought something that was ridiculously expensive, they were sort of classy. And if you went into paying too much extra, then you're trying a bit too hard.[299]

Post rebellion, smoking cigarettes was more open and lent itself to an outward facing style. Given the changing political background, some cigarettes were valid examples of conspicuous consumption; this meant that people outside the group could observe affiliation:

> Some of the kids at school (smoked Peter Stuyvesant), but it was boys that smoked them, the ones that were in with that crowd, the casual soul boys.[300]

And the consumption patterns lent themselves to overlapping groups of affiliation – interviewees spoke of Marlboro or Silk Cut smokers, for example, as defined groups who would recognise each other, and have something in common, beyond a transactional level. Marlboro brand's association with masculinity as brand and lifestyle marketing, and in particular the role of the Marlboro cowboy, is assessed in White, et al: 'The genius of the cowboy was not only his capacity to initiate consumption but the way in which consumption was framed as functional rather than aesthetic or ostentatious.'[301] Part of the cowboy brand of masculinity linked to strength, and strength was seen as a synonym for taste – an early cowboy strapline was: 'The

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[299] Kurt (1969), 5.
[300] 'Roxy (1968)', 7.
[301] Cameron White, John L Oliffe, and Joan L Bottorff, 'From Promotion to Cessation: Masculinity, Race, and Style in the Consumption of Cigarettes, 1962-1972', *American Journal of Public Health* 103, no. 4 (1 April 2013): 44–55.

filter smooths but doesn't tame the taste'.[302] Bobbie Jacobson has a similar perspective on the brand image:

> In the early 1970s the Marlboro cowboy rode roughshod over Britain, followed closely by the more refined high-class pilot whose job it was to persuade you to smoke Rothmans 'When you know what you're doing'.[303]

Images and values, whether directly projected or inferred, led to the formation of brand groups – these might exist as part of or across subcultures and other groups. Interviewees spoke of being able to respectfully affiliate with, or dismiss, other brand smokers. Many cigarettes fitted into a theme of conspicuous consumption, although the addition of affiliated brand groups and the use of cigarettes to signal class or rebellion are both layers that cigarettes offer beyond this theme.

For some, More cigarettes were seen as the epitome of conspicuous consumption. More cigarettes were launched in the United States in 1974, and shortly after in the United Kingdom, with a campaign that certainly focused on sophistication and slimness: 'I remember seeing them. They almost didn't look like cigarettes. Almost made to look not like a masculine cigarette.'[304] Although they were unusual in that, unlike most cigarettes aimed at women where the whole cigarette including the filter was white, Clare dismissed this in favour of taste and, literally, the fuller package:

> That was the worst thing about them, I didn't like the fact they were brown. I didn't think they were very nice looking. But they were really nice to smoke. And I never thought 'Oh,

[302] 'The Marlboro Story (Short 1969) - IMDb', accessed 4 December 2023, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt15062780/.
[303] Jacobson, *Beating the Ladykillers*, 51.
[304] 'Adam (1961)', 16.

> they're cool. I think I'll buy those. It was just the shape of them and the box, the very slim box.[305]

The alignment of brand style to cigarette smoking was key in the 1980s; one interviewee talked about the importance of placing a 'posh' brand of cigarettes at the top of an open bag so that it was visible when going out. There was, however, a sense of stepping away from the marketing messages when they became too obvious and patronising:

> I knew (More cigarettes) through advertising, I never knew anyone who would have bought them. And again it's very much gendered, isn't it? It's very much focused on how to smoke in a feminine way, my drag queen friends might have used them as an accessory that they would use ironically, maybe even as part of an act. I would have seen them as a novelty cigarette, I think... If someone came in with this in a bag, I'm not saying we would have said anything but immediately there'd be an assumption this person does not understand what's happening. They're being fooled by the industry into this gendered representation of women in advertising...so there was this conscious engagement with smoking via the advertising, which was completely disconnected with our own use.[306]

In summary, the ordinariness of cigarette smoking worked both within the expected structures of family, school, work, class and social environments, but also within themes of rebellion and consumption – although these were accepted societal themes, their normalisation had only really happened in this generation. It could be argued that cigarettes were part of an enabling mechanism that actually allowed rebellion and consumption to be ordinary activities. In a similar vein, the acceptance of subcultures as an intrinsic part of a lightly rebellious and less

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[305] 'Bill & Clare (1961, 1962)', 8.
[306] 'Alison (1969)', 12.

deferential society was also enabled by the apparent dichotomy between the normality and rebellion of cigarette smoking – in reality, cigarette smoking allowed young people to be rebellious and ordinary at the same time. And as this softening acceptance of subcultures developed, it is interesting that affiliation to a cigarette brand was often stronger than affiliation to a subculture - this is part of the assessment that we will consider in the next chapter.

4. SUBCULTURES & INFLUENCES - POP IDOLS, YOUTH CULTURES AND POPULAR MYTHS: SMOKING AND SUBCULTURAL FLUIDITY, FROM PUNK TO RAVE

Most of us really enjoyed smoking…I know I did, and I couldn't imagine sitting with a pint or being at a gig without having a cigarette…and I probably made more friends than I would have had I not smoked. And probably more interesting friends because, a lot of the time, the more interesting people I knew were the smokers.[307]

As we have discussed in the previous chapter, the ordinariness of cigarette smoking existed within Britain's society. This chapter will look further into cultural and subcultural influences, reflecting Raymond Williams's view that culture is 'ordinary, in every society and every mind'.[308]

Certainly the life being led may feel more ordinary in the moment than on reflection. But even the reflections in this chapter will consider youth subcultures as a state of ordinariness as much as exception; by considering subcultural and other influences through the lens of the cigarette smoking, we will see that ordinariness permeates throughout. Moreover, this chapter will continue the story of influences on cigarette practice and brand choice being part of a cultural influence as much as any marketing activity.

It is important that we consider cigarette smokers themselves as a subculture. Although the practice of cigarette smoking was ordinary in itself, there was still a rebellious divide between the smoker and the non smoker, which smokers often saw as a measure of coolness, as described in chapter three. And the overlap with other subcultures was sometimes facilitated

[307] 'Adam (1961)', 17.
[308] J. McGuigan, *Raymond Williams on Culture and Society: Essential Writings* (SAGE Publications, 2014)

by cigarette smoking – figure 17 shows the way in which transactional acts of sharing a smoke or offering a cigarette could blur the subcultural boundary; this is evidenced in quotes throughout this document, and also shows the way in which the sub-subcultures in the previous chapter might work in practice – the sharing of a cigarette between, say, a casual and a football player could blur a line of membership. And the dotted line on the diagram, between two non-intersecting groups, apparently with only smoking in common, might form an even stronger transactional link if there was a shared brand affinity:

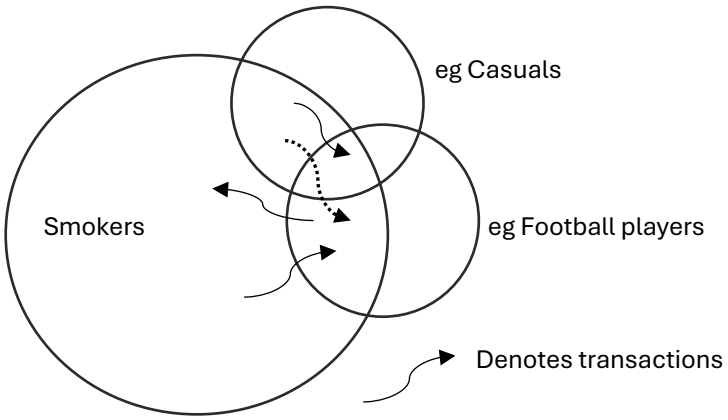

Figure 18 - Intersecting subcultures and transactional blurring

In a literal sense, subcultures are groups within a culture that share interests and practices. In historical and sociological analysis, subcultural assessment tends to narrow to shared points of rebellion, typically from within a working class environment. Interviewees in this study didn't necessarily reflect this narrowing, but were extremely interesting from a subcultural perspective nonetheless. There were two particular points of differentiation from conventional subcultural analysis which were instructive. Firstly, interviewees saw subcultural influence in terms of proximity as much as from membership, as explored in the introduction to this thesis. Secondly, the cultural influences on the young smoker were just as important outside subculture as inside, and often worked in parallel – interviewees who saw themselves as close to punk subculture, for example, could be hugely influenced by the cigarette brands smoked on

The Sweeney. With this in mind, this chapter will initially examine subcultures from a membership and proximity perspective, and will then turn to other influences - these are broadly categorised as music, media, drugs and myth. Then we'll briefly examine the influences of cost and taste. Finally, we will reflect on the ability for cigarette smoking to reflect cultural change. To an extent, this will address the apparent conflict between Raymond Williams' perspective of culture being ordinary against his views on class division – we will consider the context of emergent, residual and dominant classes, whilst still maintaining the ordinariness (and, by extension, ubiquity across class) of the act of smoking itself.

As Garland et al noted in 2012, '…the emergence of such easily recognisable subcultural 'types' as teddy boys, rockers, beats, teeny-boppers, mods, hippies, skinheads, suedeheads, soul boys and punks all but invited social commentary as to their rationale, purpose and significance.'[309] But the CCCS approach of binding youth subculture into tight groups, and to align with both class and opposition, was not without its critics. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the explosion of mass communication, opportunity for individualism, combined with an emphasis on identity politics, increasing class fluidity and post-modern sensibilities led to the blurring of subcultural divisions and the opportunities for young people to transition between them. As Paul Hodkinson writes: '…the centrality of increasingly complex, fluid and diversified culture industries makes it increasingly unlikely that young people will commit themselves to clearly bounded subcultures.'[310]

And whilst rebellion was often important, it was tolerated, accepted, and even encouraged by an older generation that had 'seen it all before'. This interpretation is in line with Gary Clarke's

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[309] Jon Garland, Keith Gildart, Anna Gough - Yates, Paul Hodkinson, Bill Osgerby, Lucy Robinson, John Street, Pete Webb & Matthew Worley "Introduction: Youth Culture, Popular Music and the End of 'Consensus' in Post - War Britain," *Contemporary British History*, volume 26, issue 3 (September 2012) pp. 265-271

[310] Paul Hodkinson, and Wolfgang Deicke, *Youth Cultures: Scenes, Subcultures and Tribes* (Florence, USA: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007), 9.

critique of sub-cultural theory – in challenging Cohen's interpretation of sub-culture as a specific problem-solving option, he cites the propensity for youth to move in and out of different groups.[311] Moreover, the early 1970's gave rise to cultures dynamically moving within themselves. Followers of David Bowie, for example, were challenged to move with the times or to stick with an invested identity, and risk being left behind.

Smoking was a relatively common theme to important subcultural figures: 'Pretty much all the people, all the cultural heroes that I had, all smoked. It was just what they did.'[312] And it overrode the social and cultural connections that had historically been in place:

> Even though my parents smoked, and I had this connection with smoking as being something older people did at that point in the mid 1980s, smoking was absolutely connected to the subcultural experience. There wasn't much of a separation. So there was an inevitability about it.[313]

Depending on the subculture, it was possible to find brand affinity, although there was a blurring according to the individual relationship with the group. And there was a purpose to this affinity which matched the symbolism of the brand:

> People would smoke whatever was available, but you know the punks would like to identify with working class-ness, which meant Number Six and B&H. Actually, B&H was very much a black thing…You didn't smoke Balkan Sobranies if you were at a punk gig, but later on it was all dressing up, these Russian black cigarettes and the multicoloured cigarettes, they were quite popular because they looked kind of fun. That was more of a new romantic thing. And there was a sort of mod revival at the end of the 70s, when

[311] Clarke, 'Defending Ski-Jumpers: A Critique of Theories of Youth Sub-Cultures'.
[312] 'Oscar (1960)', 1.
[313] 'Alison (1969)', 2.

> you'd smoke whatever you could lay your hands on. Really. You know, I mean, everybody was addicted by then, in my generation.[314]

As subcultures changed within themselves, so symbols and affinities changed:

> Your original early 60s mods, the ones who were the modernists and lovers of modern jazz and hand tailored suits would definitely have smoked Gauloises. Later on, the more lumpen mods, I think you'd definitely expect them to smoke a British fag in packets of 20, Piccadilly, Benson's, maybe Peter Stuyvesant.[315]

Similarly, the teddy boy culture of the 50s and 60s, whose roots were more firmly placed in their working class identities, would not necessarily recognise some of the revivalist style:

> They would all try and smoke American brands, and I remember thinking, isn't it cool they stick those in your shirt pocket? There was something very attractive also about the way the soft packs opened - you would delve in or wiggle them and one would drop out.[316]

As a movement, punk ticked all the subcultural boxes outlined by CCCS in *Resistance through Rituals*.[317] But it was also a subculture with reach well beyond the limits of group membership. In the 21st century, there is still talk of a punk ethos, and 'post-punk' helped to define thinking and behaviour as soon as the brief flames of the punk movement had burnt out. Punk also had its roots within a rebellious working class, and for interlopers, it was important to carry the badges of authenticity:

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[314] 'Oscar (1960)', 5.
[315] 'Zach (1958)', 4.
[316] 'Adam (1961)', 13.
[317] Hall and Jefferson, *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, 11–13.

> In terms of smoking I guess you would say they'd be smoking more like proletariat fags, I guess your Number Six, your roll ups. I'd also point out a lot of those gigs would have been with reggae bands, Steel Pulse, Misty In Roots, and you'd have had a lot of people smoking weed as well, you'd have had that kind of smoke as well, wouldn't you? So I guess maybe that would have been more the thing to do to show you were down with everything.[318]

> There were kids that that thought it cool to smoke the cheapest brands and whether that was because they couldn't afford to buy the other ones, or whether it's because they just thought it was the whole working class thing, it looked better. The two cheapest brands were Number Ten and Sovereign. I can remember loads of my punk rock friends smoking Sovereigns. And that was when king size cigarettes became the norm, but they were still smoking little Sovereign cigarettes.[319]

There was a limit to how aligned to working class values the movement wanted to be - Woodbines were probably the most traditionally working class post war cigarette, but not in London:

> I never saw anyone in London smoking Woodbines. Around 88, 89 I had a girlfriend from Nottingham, so we'd go up to Nottingham quite a lot. And everyone up there smoked Embassy, a few Woodbines as a well, but no, I wouldn't say it wasn't any brand. [320]

Beyond any badge, the way in which you smoked was important too:

> Music was always my life, so I very, very quickly jumped into subcultures from punk rock onwards really... punk was the first subculture where I was old enough to really get

[318] 'Michael (1959)', 6.
[319] 'Frank (1960)', 4.
[320] 'Nathan (1959)', 3.

> involved with it. And yes, smoking was a big part of that... I used to try and keep it in my mouth as long as possible. Just have it in the corner of my mouth without taking it out because Marlon Brando did it in The Wild One - he just had a cigarette hanging from his mouth and never seem to take it out. Your eyes would be squinting as you were trying to be cool. And I think Paul Simonon used to do that as well, just have the cigarette hanging from his mouth, so I always liked that. And I always tried to do that.[321]

Punk gave permission to young people to move into, or borrow from, different subcultures in a way that had not been seen in earlier youth movements. In so doing, it allowed subsequent subcultures to explode and sharply decline, lending out style elements on the way. In some ways, this meant that the briefly popular movements, often driven by music, were regarded as fashions rather than 'formed' subcultures. And there was sometimes a confusion or frustration about the eclectic, or bricolage, nature of subcultural style:

> At those times, I was wearing a lot of clothes from jumble sales, smashed up old leather jackets. Torn jeans. Winkle pickers from jumble sales. I didn't think of myself as being a part of any subculture. I just still bought into the sort of ethos about around punk and new wave music, without knowing it was a post punk thing, really.[322]

> It always felt it was still early enough not to feel quite right. It's like you had to pick; I was always frustrated with my inability to pick one. So there's pictures...I'm a goth. I'm a rockabilly. I'm a new romantic. Like I couldn't pick one and just stick with it. So all pictures I have of my teenage years are completely different people, but it isn't yet the time at which you felt comfortable about that. There was still a sense of a lack of authenticity, like a football team - you've got to pick one and stick with it for the rest of

[321] 'Dave (1962)', 3.
[322] 'Steve (1961)', 4.

> your life. And I always envied people who felt secure enough to belong to just the one and didn't need any of the others. It was only after maybe the 90s that that loosened up a little bit for me anyway.[323]

FROM POST PUNK TO RAVE

For some in the post-punk scene, the move away from punk roots to a significant contrast, was accompanied by a very different smoking style:

> In...the post punk years... where people went through a period of smoking Sobranies, the coloured ones.... people went through them because they thought it was incredibly stylish. Not enjoying them... the new Romantics... I was in Bristol, so it's hardly like being at the Blitz Club in London, but a lot of those people weren't even inhaling. It was an absolute pose where they would stand around and pose with a cigarette, particularly the girls. It was usually things like Sobranie. Because I suppose it fitted in with the whole new romantic image of the Bowie kids, as we call them in Bristol, you know every town had Bowie nights, whether they were as stylish as the Blitz club or not.[324]

The style became more important than any generic smoking statement:

> Yeah, it looked great. Also, girls looked fantastic smoking, men less so, and I certainly didn't like the way men typically held cigarettes. So the glamourous aspect was more the women. (For me) it looked something more on the feminine side as opposed to masculine. I'd put my wrist a certain way so that it was a pose. There was a definite pose, but everyone in the new romantic scene and in the Batcave posed.[325]

And for some, the brands were integral to the pose:

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[323] 'Alison (1969)', 6.
[324] 'Frank (1960)', 5.
[325] 'Nathan (1959)', 2.

> And in terms of brands, when we went up West, if we went out clubbing, we'd get the cocktail cigarettes, with the gold filters. And they were either black or the colours, and if we couldn't get them, we'd get Vogue, which again, like all outwardly very gay fellas used to smoke. And we'd put the cigarette in a cigarette holder. It was very pretentious! That whole paraphernalia of having a cigarette case and having a cigarette. It was all part of the scene. (Sobranies) - you'd probably just have one all night! They were just for posing about rather for taking very many drags. [326]

For some interviewees there was even a perceived hierarchy to observed subcultures, together with a dismissive approach to others, partly based on cigarette brand and symbolism:

> The uber cool kids would smoke Gitanes and Camel. Then you'd have a strata below, also cool kids, who'd smoke Marlboro. The Camel soft pack was like the ultimate, but some would say they wouldn't smoke Marlboro, because if you turn the packet like this and do that and do that you get KKK. Cool kids would also smoke Gauloises. And then you had the new age kids, with the multicoloured clothes and harem pants and they would go to India and come back these things called biddies, like a wrapped tobacco leaf, with a little red thread. And they'd come back and pose about, sitting on the grass cross-legged, talking about existentialism. So different tribes had different things.[327]

The soul boys of the late 1970s, building their presence primarily across nightclubs in the northwest and southeast of the country, had roots in Northern Soul, and partly developed into the casual culture of the 1980s. Labels were important to both soul boys and casuals, and the theme of fashionable labelling applied to cigarettes as much as it did to clothing designers:

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[326] 'Roxy (1968)', 3.
[327] 'Roxy (1968)', 3.

> I was pretty much into soul boy stuff. You couldn't smoke on dance floors, they were often in quite old-fashioned venues like Top Rank. You might put your fag out on the dance floor; you might hit someone in the eye with a cigarette, and so forth. That would have been probably Marlboro. Then there was a vague swing revival. Oxford bags and all that kind of stuff - quite Gatsby. Double breasted suits. And I think if you're wearing a zoot suit, or whatever the charity shop has got that looks like it, you're pretty cool. And the GI look, which Ferry had for a while, the American khaki shirt with the tie, that would have been a Chesterfield or Marlboro or Stuyvesant thing. And Bensons - I would have probably been just buying them because they were they were available. I think they might have been the most popular.[328]

This crossover between subcultures has received little academic consideration, but it was possible to be part of different subcultures in a way that was not possible in the tighter memberships of 50s and 60s subcultures. Football, for example, had its own overlaps into subcultural memberships:

> I'd describe myself as a late 90s, early 00s casual, and most of my friends fitted in that category as well. Half of them smoked, the ones that didn't were the sporty ones, the ones that took sport seriously – we all played football.[329]

Although sport may not be regarded today as the ideal alignment with cigarette smoking, the ordinariness of cigarette smoking in the 1970s and 1980s meant that there could still be an association. The Britishness of brands like Benson and Hedges allowed inclusion; it was often an environment where it was important to fit in:

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[328] 'Michael (1959)', 2.
[329] 'Harry (1975)', 2.

> I played football. You go to the pub after football training and everyone would have Benson and Hedges. So you offer them round. Everyone's having the same sort of experience, whereas you go, 'I've got my Stuyvesants here' - I'm a bit of a new guy. So you have the badge. I'm just trying to be cool, which is a mistake because if you're trying, it's not cool, is it?[330]

Frank describes a brand affiliation across different sporting codes based on sponsorship:

> The Rothmans Football Yearbook was huge. Young footballers shouldn't have been smoking, but most of them did and because of that connection, a lot of them went on to Rothmans. They might not have realised that's why they were doing it, but they did...at the same time that Rothmans were getting involved in football, Benson and Hedges get involved with cricket, and so you'd often find that if you went to the cricket club, a lot of the young lads there are all on Benson and Hedges. And I'm sure it's not purely because it was the cricket connection, but again, it's that subliminal thing, isn't it? If they're going down and watching Somerset at Taunton, who at the time were the best team in the country, and there's a connection with Benson and Hedges to cricket, then they're going to smoke it, I guess.[331]

This brand allegiance to a team is an echo of the alignment of branding and sponsorship to teams in the 50s and 60s in the US – Alan Blum references New York Giant fans smoking Chesterfields, Yankee fans smoking Camels, and Dodgers fans smoking Lucky Strikes.[332]

Some casuals became involved in the acid house scene from around 1988, which in turn led to rave culture, which grew into a mainstream sub-culture by the mid 1990s, and did so in a

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[330] 'Michael (1959)', 3.
[331] 'Frank (1960)', 9.
[332] Alan Blum, 'Tobacco Industry Sponsorship of Sports - Truth Tobacco Industry Documents', 3, accessed 17 July 2024, https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=kspj0047.

rebellious, anti-establishment manner. Prior to the rave scene, nightclubs were much more accepting of a style that reflected a youth that didn't have the means or need to be ostentatious:

> In Liverpool, the soul-ey crowd tended to smoke Embassy, the short ones. They'd smoke them and drink Red Stripe. But a lot of people in Liverpool, myself included, were not so well off, so we smoked the sub-brands. Lambert and Butler mostly, and this brand called Black Cat that was really cheap. And when they had money, they'd smoke B&H. There wasn't a change when you went out, because the clubs were different. The days of teasing your hair and wearing a posh frock and high heels to a club had gone by the time you got to the 90's - it was all baggy jeans and trainers and red Kickers, especially in Liverpool, with the whole cross-pollination with Manchester.[333]

Rave culture was something that allowed a part-time and eclectic membership, with participants powering their way through weekends with a succession of recreational drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes.

> Fast forward to 1989, the Manchester baggy era was going on, the rave thing...we'd all pile on the train and go and get clothes from Manchester, which would mark us out as different when we were out on a Friday and Saturday night. We had a very definite look. It was baggy. Some wore dungarees, some wore big baggy jeans, timberland boots, caps, you know, American influenced, looking like sports coaches. The bucket hat look like the Stone Roses wore. So I'd fall into that group. That was my clique, if you like, but I was accepting and I was interested in other cultures. I'm doing art, so you come across Goths, you come across normies, townies. And then there were the raver set, they were into psychedelia and whatever else. So I was very interested in other people. Just

[333] 'Roxy (1968)', 4.

> because he was a rocker, I wouldn't feel compelled to go and kick his head in, you know, like in the 70s and 80s. So I think there was a great blurring of lines.[334]

Although this was a time that coincided with straight cigarettes becoming less affordable and a migration to roll your own (the rave culture was fueled partly by straights, and in particular, despite the diversity of members, Marlboro Lights):

> Yeah, when you're full of sweat, you can't do it, so you'd have to buy a pack. So I'm now smoking definitely a pack (of Marlboro Lights), sometimes 2 packs – you'd go out at 6-7 o'clock on a Friday night and you get home midday the next day, so you could get through 2 packs in that time. And there's a lot of sharing going on within in big shared houses, and everyone smokes, right? Everyone smokes. You know, living in a shared house with, you know, five other lads, everyone smokes. You go hang out at another big house. Everyone smokes. It's like 8 out of 10 people, you know, nine out of 10 people. Obviously there's the odd non-smoker and God, you know, you look back now and just like, I'm so sorry. We were so obnoxious. We did not give a moment's thought to non-smokers until about 10 in the morning when the sun starts to stream through the curtains and someone's like 'can we open a fucking window!' And you're like 'Oh yeah, sorry man'.[335]

> Marlboro Lights were for that rave crowd as well. The ones who weren't the squat punk ravers, but the weekend ravers, they smoked Marlboro Lights. You couldn't really have anything else.[336]

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[334] 'Ian (1972)', 5.
[335] 'John (1971)', 4.
[336] 'Alison (1969)', 7.

Post punk had also given opportunity to goth culture, which gave the clearest example of brand selection based on packaging, perhaps at the expense of taste and cost factors:

> I couldn't ever tolerate (John Player Special). I associated them with Formula One. I liked the look of the pack and an ex-girlfriend of mine smoked them 'cause she was a staunch goth and they fitted in very much with her image.[337]

> (Sobranies are) a kind of Russian exotic cigarette. The idea of foreignness, it was the female Goths that would smoke them, the black ones. And the association was pre-revolutionary.[338]

Goth and Rave culture are both good examples of a post punk world allowing part time membership and borrowing elements from different subcultures, away from the original CCCS tight group membership, so cigarette smoking became an enabler for this collection of influences to define an individual style. From the late 1970s, the cultural environment allowed a young person to combine the styles of punk, mod, soul boy, rocker and rockabilly in a single look, it allowed listening and watching bands across different genres, although smoking, perhaps as a ubiquitous symbol of rebellion, was a near-constant:

> The culture that I wanted to be part of, I joined it too early because trying to be a 12 year old punk was not cool. So we were on the tail end of things, 1981 to 1984, so I'm 16 to 19, we were all sorts, weren't we? You wouldn't describe yourself as any of these things, but it was mixture of hippie, punk, traveler, middle class twats really! It was the drug culture; it was getting off your head time. For me it would be connected to writing 'A' in a circle everywhere.... So there it was, actually a culture that was a very distinct from others and this was after the village stuff which is about 'you're a mod, a heavy rock

[337] 'Nathan (1959)', 5.
[338] 'Pete (1967)', 6.

> person, a soul boy or a punk'. All of whom would be on a on a cycle of kicking each other. All of them smoke fags as well.[339]

The eclectic acceptance also applied to a wider acceptance of different consumer brands, including cigarettes. For Victor, the choice of cigarette was a key part of self-identity:

> We thought (smoking different cigarettes) was cool, but we were trying to be very alternative punky people in a really crappy village, which at that point hadn't been gentrified in the way it has been now…If you had some money for cigarettes, then it would be Navy Cut. It just adds to the coolness of being 17, doesn't it? Of pretending you're from 1933 and smoking filterless fags. I'm not sure why now, but it did.[340]

And the self-identity could change over time, sometimes very quickly:

> The soul boy scene was very much my introduction to a kind of subculture. When I was 14, Genesis and Status Quo and Thin Lizzy, those were quite big acts. Whereas the Soul Boy scene was very much our thing. And then of course Saturday Night Fever came out and the whole thing became disco. So that kind of stopped that. But I was lucky – I saw a few punk bands and some reggae stuff as well. I wasn't a spiky head with chains, all that kind of stuff. I was trying to look a bit of a mod, really. I suppose you call it trying to look cool when you're not cool. You never are, are you, but you're trying. So when I was 17, it would have been Sobranies or menthol, whichever I thought was going to be coolest at the time. So I'm guessing there would have been a link between whatever I thought whatever Bryan Ferry was smoking, or David Bowie, and definitely the kind of things that other people didn't have, like the Stuyvesants and soft packs. [341]

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[339] 'Victor (1965)', 3.
[340] 'Victor (1965)', 3.
[341] Michael (1959), 4.

FITTING IN AND STANDING OUT

Against the challenge of a unique self-identification, there was the need to fit in – this was going to be a challenge against options to belong to a range of eclectic subcultural choices. Sometimes identity could be lost on the way:

> Well, it's interesting because coming from another place, fitting in becomes the most important a thing, and a sense of self is lost in that a little bit. I've talked about this with people with other immigrants. It becomes the most important thing. And what people reflect back to you in terms of how they respond to you; the cues that you're putting out there becomes the most important thing, and there was a loss of a sense of myself. I was searching for a sense of self amongst this, and belonging was the only thing I was really interested in. I felt very, very separate. I mean, I still do. I've always felt like I'm a bit of an outsider. I've fallen into things where I'm occupying a place that shouldn't really be mine.[342]

However confusing the variety of sub-cultural influences there were for young people to link to, there were at least defined styles that people could tie into, or even call home. Ian's reflection is that there's less opportunity these days:

> It's one of the most lamented things. Now that there is a lack of countercultures and subcultures and things like that. When I was at school, when I was at college, you had the rockers, the Scooter Boys, the break dancing lot, the Goths, and there's none of that sort of diversity now, is there?[343]

[342] 'Alison (1969)', 5.
[343] 'Ian (1972)', 5.

Cigarettes illustrate the changing world of subcultures in the 80s and 90s in particular, the blurring of lines, and the perception of self-identity, which echoes some of the findings in chapter three.

POP IDOLS – MUSICIANS AS CULTURAL ARBITERS

Within subcultures, there were further influences on the young person, expressed here through cigarette smoking, but clearly as a wider symbol of cultural alignment. The influence of music, and particularly iconic musicians, on the smoking choices of young people needs to be separated from, and occasionally be positioned above, subcultures. And the images of musicians were so powerful, particularly in a world where access to images was relatively limited, that they could have a specific influence in their own right. Interviewees mentioned very specific images, and these could be across all sorts of musical genres:

> I'd say the biggest factor in moving me to becoming a smoker was The Beatles. I became a massive Beatles fan… I got lots of books about The Beatles and consumed everything I could, and there was one picture of John Lennon, from about '64, and he was in this suit, and with his black and white Rickenbacker, and this cigarette stuck on the end of the bottom E string, and I remember thinking 'That's so cool'. So I was thinking that smoking was cool, but I'm not going to do it.[344]

Figure 19 - Lennon/Rickenbacker (1974) Getty Images

[344] 'Harry (1975)', 1.

Well, the Camel band - one of their album covers was the Camel fag packet. So I like that I made that connection.[345]

Figure 20 - Camel - Mirage (1974)
Deram Records

Brian Ferry was quite a cool guy. I think there's an album cover with him smoking a menthol cigarette. He's got a white tuxedo on the front so it was post Roxy Music.[346]

Figure 21 - Bryan Ferry – Another Time, Another Place (1974)
Island Records

I always thought The Clash, The Sex Pistols looked good smoking. Seeing photographs of guys with fags in their hands was amazing for me. Siouxsie Sue in particular, was very, very glamorous. And that wasn't why I smoked, but certainly with the new romantic scene, I thought it looked great. Lipstick on the cigarette - it looked great.[347]

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[345] 'Bill & Clare (1961, 1962)', 5.
[346] 'Michael (1959)', 1.
[347] 'Nathan (1959)', 1.

Inevitably, the nature of the packet badge became a direct, and sometimes intentional product placement:

> I think I quite liked the taste (of Marlboro), but I think the main thing was that I think I saw Joe Strummer smoking one and for a couple of bands it seemed to be the cigarette de jour. And then yeah, that probably did influence me. I did feel like all the cool people smoked Marlboros. And that probably did influence me, and then once you got used to a certain brand, I found it difficult to smoke any other cigarette because I was just so used to the taste.[348]

> I smoked B&H as well – you felt cooler if you were smoking B&H, partly due to Oasis. None of us were huge Oasis fans, but they were cool and they influenced our culture in the late 90's. And they released a box set of singles in B&H silver and gold, so that was something we were very conscious of.[349]

> I swear to this day that the reason that (Bowie) smoked Gitanes was because he thought it was cool. You know, you've got to say that Bowie was a huge wannabe. So I think the Marlboro thing came later when he was already famous. But I think the Gitanes thing was very much part of this creation, that he forged. Older Bowie, say from '77, you think of him as a Marlboro smoker. But Marlboro never appealed to me.[350]

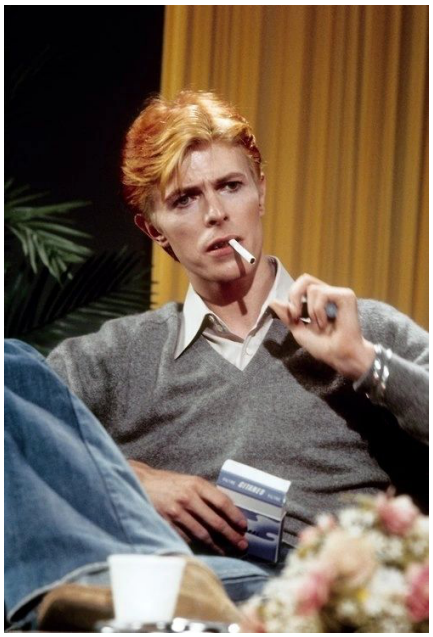

Figure 22 - Bowie/Gitanes (1976) Getty Images

[348] 'Dave (1962)', 2.
[349] 'Harry (1975)', 2.
[350] 'Frank (1960)', 3.

The demographic of interviewees lends itself to particular influences from David Bowie, and specific brand choices to align with their fandom:

> The reason I started smoking is basically because I idolised David Bowie, and Bowie was always seen with this very cool Gitanes wafting about. And I thought I want to be cool. Like lots of kids.[351]

And the images that were cited were aligned with coolness, and even wellbeing:

> I remember being very impressed by Iggy Pop, in the studio, having two cigarettes on the go, so that when one finished he could move straight on to the next! And I remember thinking he looked so healthy on it![352]

Sometimes, music provided the missing part of a self-identity, along with cigarettes:

> So, there was a sense of incompleteness - we had the music, we had the cigs, we were starting to move away from 70s dress sense. Our hair was getting shorter. We were starting to wear Oxfam suits...And then Dr Feelgood came along in 1974. Now, these were people who didn't look like anybody else. They had short hair and they had Oxfam, well, they weren't Oxfam suits. In fact, they were probably more like Mr Byrite suits. And they

Figure 233 - Lee Brilleaux (1980) Uncut

[351] 'Frank (1960)', 1.
[352] 'Adam (1961)', 8.

> all smoked like bastards. Lee Brilleaux's way with a cig was legendary. And we certainly aspired to smoke like Lee.[353]

In previous generations, alignment of musicians to brand would come in the form of endorsement – singers in the 50's for example would advertise cigarettes as being easy on the throat'. But the influence of musicians in our time period was very different. In some cases, it was about the natural and ordinary rebellion of smoking and the way in which a cigarette was smoked, which meant that it was a long way from a traditional endorsement. But we can see in the references to Bowie and Oasis above, that it could be about brand as well; in the same way that we have seen proximity to a subculture being as important as membership, fans would not necessarily want to *be* Bowie or one of the Gallagher brothers, but they might want to feel a connection.

Beyond subcultures and music, other media – film, TV, literature all used cigarette smoking as a signaling prop and motif, sometimes of coolness, sometimes of hardness or evil, but always as a symbol of adulthood:

> The information you're getting from movies and TV is that smoking is an adult activity. And I think from that there is a tie in, if you want to appear older and more mature than your years, then smoking is the way to go.[354]

> And I would have to mention Humphrey Bogart in all of this, that man could fucking smoke. I was always a lover of movies, and especially film noir. And there's some great smoking in film noir. And of course we were fancying ourselves as young existentialists as well, and there were pictures of Albert Camus with a cig in his mouth. I don't think we

[353] 'Zach (1958)', 2.
[354] 'Pete (1967)', 1.

> bore very much resemblance to him, but I think we would have aspired to if we'd been prepared to get our hair cut.[355]

Specific media branding impacted behaviour, in the same way as musical icons did: 'I need to mention the Sweeney. Jack Regan smoked Piccadilly Number One. Packets of 25. And I did smoke Piccadilly Number Ones a few years later.'[356]

Even a generalised feel of media influence could form behaviour and identity:

> I smoked openly at parties or if we went out for an evening, that kind of thing. I think it was cool. Definitely. I guess it's that kind of association with cool people, you could take it back to the 50s, the 60. You know the movie stars, the beat poets, all these people smoked and even to this day when it's depicted in cinematography, it just seems very glamorous, very cool, doesn't it? I couldn't tell you any particular person now, but those movie stars in 40s melodramas...I had a cigarette case and a proper lighter, not like the plastic one I have now. We weren't averse to using a cigarette holder.[357]

As smoking became less acceptable socially, so media began to reflect characters who with less appeal, sometimes alongside particular branding:

> But there were little bits like that, where gradually on telly it changed from just normal characters smoking, to only the wrong 'uns. If you smoked you were either Dot Cotton or some sort of gangster, villain or bad lad. The way that changed in television, went along with the changes to society.[358]

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[355] 'Zach (1958)', 2.
[356] 'Zach (1958)'.
[357] 'Roxy (1968)', 3.
[358] Kurt (1969), 6.

CIGARETTES & DRUGS

Music and media were freely available to young people so provided influence often without invitation. The influence of a drug culture was rather different – it had to be sought out as part of a development. Whether tobacco use offers a route to other drugs is a contentious issue - Kleinig concludes that all policies based on gateway drug hypotheses are the result of an over-simplified interpretation of drug usage, and this is borne out in several interviewee quotes: [359]

> I don't see smoking as being a gateway thing, to be honest. I would have found all those things anyway. And I know people who smoke dope who never smoked cigarettes. I mean, they did smoke cigarettes because they were smoking them in joints, and they were addicted to cigarettes in that way. But I know people who've never smoked a cigarette who were quite into drugs.[360]

> We did have grass in the mid 80s - we knew it was around, but I it wasn't accessible to me. So I probably had my first proper tobacco when I was 14 I when I had my first spliff. And from then on, I would usually be the one who provided the hash and someone else would provide the tobacco. So I was I was one step removed from this, I didn't buy or smoke cigarettes either.[361]

There is a theme of drug use, particularly marijuana, as an accepted part of the adolescent journey; these are clearly defined and critical memories:

> And then, you leave school. Get into drinking, starting to go to gigs in Liverpool. And then you have to start buying hash from Reggie, the local hippie. Walk up to his house on the edge of town, where there's an abandoned bus and weeds growing everywhere, and he

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[359] John Kleinig, 'Ready for Retirement: The Gateway Drug Hypothesis', *Substance Use & Misuse* 50, no. 8–9 (29 July 2015): 971–75.
[360] 'Will (1966)', 8.
[361] 'Alison (1969)', 2.

introduces me to the joys of Moroccan hash rolled up with your tobacco. And then that becomes the way to smoke. You know, you just want to smoke that all the time.[362]

There are examples of how a 'gateway' drug can operate in both directions:

> So I had my first fag when I was about 11. I didn't like it. And I didn't have any until I was about 16-17, I suppose, when I start smoking weed. So that was my gateway to nicotine. And that's how it remained up until when I was 20 and then I ruptured my anterior cruciate ligament. And I spent a lot of time sitting around. In a house full of smokers. And I started smoking on a semi-regular basis. So instead of smoking a spliff, I used to have a cigarette, so I wasn't completely bombed all the time and I was idle, kind of bored, sitting there in a full leg cast. And so that's, yeah, that's how I think it started on a regular basis. I started because I'd become addicted to the nicotine high and it was only later that I realised that's what it was.[363]

> Oh yeah, I immediately gravitated to the dope smokers. So I that was my entry into smoking. I had a desire not to smoke a cigarette. But I was pretty keen on something that allayed a lot of my sexual anxiety and shyness. And the dope smokers offered community, you know. I was also rebelling. It offered an identity. It offered sedation. And when you can get that, you smoke cigarettes and that's how I got into smoking cigarettes. Purely through that...Well, that's where the cool crowd were. They were the people that were interesting. They were also studying philosophy, and subjects that I was interested in. It wasn't just dope, we were looking at mescaline, LSD, you know, Timothy Leary stuff.[364]

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[362] 'John (1971)', 3.
[363] 'Eddie (1970)', 1.
[364] 'Grace (1953)', 2.

For Tom, cigarettes became a means to an end:

> I've been through some hypnotism to get rid of smoking. Now every time I smoke a cigarette it tastes horrible, because 20 years ago I was hypnotised into not appreciating it anymore. But I still do it. I smoke for other reasons. I smoke because I use tobacco to mix with grass. And it just provides a combustion.[365]

Of further interest is the relationship between cigarette smoking and drug use in terms of adolescent development and brand identity. Particular brands lent themselves to use beyond cigarette smoking:

> I smoked Marlboro Lights – everyone else I knew smoked them. When you first start smoking, you're cadging them off other people, so that's what you'd get used to, and you'd get into the habit of buying them. A big factor was how easy it was to crumble the tobacco into a spliff – Marlboro Lights were much easier than other brands.[366]

> But before long, by the time I was 14, it was always Bensons. And part of that was to do with smoking hash because we got into smoking hash at 14, 15. Partly it was Bensons because they sell them in tens. That's a big attraction. But as well, even years later when you went to a rave, no one smokes anything other than Bensons. Well, maybe Marlboro, but really B&H were just the fag of choice. And I think it's that we believed them to be the best cigarettes for rolling joints.[367]

Although there were also practical concerns to be considered beyond brand:

> And then from…1989…everybody smoked Marlboro Lights then but also roll ups…everybody would always have cigarettes because by the late 80s, smoking hash

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[365] 'Tom (1962)', 2.
[366] 'Harry (1975)', 2.
[367] 'Will (1966)', 2.

> wasn't as taboo. And joints made from roll ups always tasted shite, so everybody would always have cigarettes for smoking hash. All I remember is Marlboro Lights. But if…somebody had half an ounce of hash and you go back to their flat after the club for a big session, people might actually just buy a box of cheap cigarettes, perhaps even own brand cigarettes, which would sometimes be smaller because if you were to roll a joint with a Marlboro Light, you'd always have maybe a centimetre at the bottom that wouldn't be used up, so folk might go for cheaper brands simply to facilitate hash smoking.[368]

The acceptance of smoking cigarettes could be at odds with the acceptance of marijuana:

> I told (my parents) that I smoked pot and that I smoked joints. But they'd have been hugely disappointed, still hugely disappointed if they knew that I smoked tobacco on its own without anything in it. It's something I've never admitted to. And…I've never told my kids that I smoked tobacco on its own and cigarettes and stuff. I've told them I smoke joints and weed and stuff. So I think it's like a either a point of shame or a guilty pleasure. It's probably more of the former, I should think than the latter.[369]

Finally, there is a strong relationship between smoking and amphetamines:

> Well, the one thing (subcultures) all had in common was cigarettes. When I was 16,17, punk was kicking off…I was in London…everybody smoked. Plus, people are taking speed, amphetamines, that make you want to smoke like a maniac.[370]

> The (Kent) soft pack obviously being preferred for cool reasons, because it looked more like a movie cigarette pack. And they were my speeding cigarette of choice. Three packs

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[368] 'Bob (1969)', 6.
[369] 'Eddie (1970)', 3.
[370] 'Oscar (1960)', 5.

> of Kent in a night…And speed and smoking do go together, and it's not the speed that kills you, it's the 60 fags that you smoke when you're taking it.[371]

The examples of drug usage and the links with cigarette smoking fit with the description of a 'soft rebellion' explored in chapter two. Certainly, amongst many of the subcultures, experimentation and usage was both tolerated and expected, in the same way that cigarettes were considered by wider society. There was a demarcation around legality, but far less so at a young person's level, where the main concerns were around availability and getting caught, rather than whether the law was there for any purpose. Behaviorally, this has an interesting parallel in the way cigarettes were smoked defiantly as public smoking bans began to take effect in Britain after 2007.

MYTH AND RITUAL

Alongside the draw to drug use came the sort of myths that were appropriate to adolescent illegal activity, but myths were not restricted to this area. Hebdige describes mythology as a factor in the creation of subcultures such as mods and skinheads, so it is no surprise that myths around cigarette smoking were particularly appealing to adolescent curiosity.[372] Whether or not they were taken seriously depended on the source and the recipient, but what is important was that they helped shape some young people's behaviour. The primary myth, working alongside the 'it's bad for you' line which we considered in chapter two, was that it would stunt growth: 'The whole myth of cigarettes, was that it would stunt our growth. And I grew up to be 6 foot 2!'[373] However, mythmaking was also directed at brands. If you took apart a packet of Marlboro, you could display three notional 'K' letters together with gold and blue spots and two crosses; this allowed the myth to develop that Marlboro were owned by the Ku

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[371] 'Zach (1958)', 2.
[372] Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*.
[373] 'Liam (1966)', 7.

Klux Klan. So firmly was the rumour entrenched that Phillip Morris issued a denial to The Voice in 1983.[374] And many young people believed, or possibly believed what they wanted to believe:

> No one smoked (Marlboro). Because they were owned by the KKK and they were racist. If you moved the packet there were 3 Ks on it, which meant Ku Klux Klan. We had no proof of that. But it was a fact. Everyone knew it as they were racist 'cause they run by the Ku Klux Klan.[375]

But the nature of the myth, together with some insinuations about additives, didn't always prevent their use:

> Marlboro had this thing about the Ku Klux Klan. But someone who smokes Marlboro is like me, and I'm not hostile towards it. There was a whole thing about the Ku Klux Klan and Philip Morris as well, the people said they put fibreglass in them, and that's why they tasted you got a harshness at the back of the neck with them. There's something maybe a bit right wing and American about them, maybe.[376]

The myth only appeared to relate to Marlboro Reds, rather than Lights, which had a very similar pack design. Perhaps by the time Marlboro Lights had launched, the myth had faded:

> Another thing about Marlboro Reds and Marlboro in general was the apocryphal rumour about how Marlboro funded the Ku Klux Klan, because if you fold the packet in a certain way, it says KKK. So they were taboo, that was another reason why we'd have stayed well away from smoking Marlboro Reds. Strangely that didn't seem to translate over to Marlboro Silvers (Lights). They weren't stigmatised in that same way, which is really

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[374] 'Voice 35 Years: How a Reader's Letter Led to KKK Claim - The Voice Online', accessed 27 June 2024, https://archive.voice-online.co.uk/article/voice-35-years-how-readers-letter-led-kkk-claim.
[375] Kurt (1969), 4.
[376] 'Will (1966)', 5.

> interesting in itself. I'd never actually considered that. Why did that stigmatisation not transfer through? It's not like we'd become depoliticised or anything by that time.[377]

And further to the KKK conspiracy was the (true) story about the Marlboro Man[378]:

> Always fairly cool, isn't it? It was never a bad thing to pull out. Not a great taste. There was a rumour about them, about the Ku Klux Klan. They had three Ks in the packet or the lettering. A bit dodgy, but it ain't going to stop you smoking. Was there a rumour about them causing bleeding lungs? There was certainly a conspiracy of some sort, and was there the famous Marlboro cowboy who died of lung cancer?[379]

Myths around Rothmans and JPS were more around dangerous additives that led to sharp, unpleasant taste:

> (Rothmans) always just tasted rough and I just thought they were rough cigarettes and that's probably where that rumour about cut glass came from.[380]

> Then people were like 'JPS – they're full of chemicals that'll damage your throat. They're really unhealthy'.[381]

Interestingly, this could even lead to a badge of masculinity:

> There was only one guy I can think of who was a JPS smoker, but he was the main glue sniffer at the school. And there was that amazing apocryphal story, which was that JPS filters were made of fibreglass, and after you smoked them, your lungs bled for five

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[377] 'Bob (1969)', 4.
[378] 'At Least Four Marlboro Men Have Died of Smoking-Related Diseases', *Los Angeles Times,* 28 January 2014.
[379] 'Michael (1959)', 5.
[380] 'Dave (1962)', 8.
[381] Kurt (1969),2.

> minutes. So that obviously affected the popularity of JPS. But I think my mate continued to smoke them because of that and the machismo associated with it.[382]

There was also no basis to the rumours around menthol cigarettes and their impact on health or sterility, but that didn't stop the myth being popular:

> There was that story that used to go around that menthol cigarettes made you impotent. And that was quite a common story. I've heard that in loads of times.[383]

> Another one was something which was really funny when all the girls started smoking Consulates. They used to say that basically, if you smoked Consulate, that you didn't get pregnant. It acted as contraception. If you smoked enough Consulate and ate lots of polo mints, you didn't get pregnant. I remember I was going out with this girl at the time, and I remember her saying that. And I remember thinking, oh, so you're up for it then, it was kind of a coded thing.[384]

> I've definitely had a More menthol in my life. And well, I have no children, so maybe the stories were right![385]

A further myth, relayed by Kurt, is around particular signaling of brands. The idea of being 'in the know' is a key part of the belonging in a subculture; Kurt's experience was from the outside:

> I worked in a gay bar…of about 10 bar staff, six or seven were gay. I was straight. One time this this guy sat at the bar, and he said: 'I'm going home' and he gave me a packet of 10 Embassy. And I'm just stood at the end of the bar, smoking one, and the landlord said to me 'you're taking a bit of a risk, aren't you?' And I said, 'what do you mean?', and he

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[382] 'Bob (1969)', 3.
[383] 'Dave (1962)', 7.
[384] 'Bob (1969)', 7.
[385] 'Dave (1962)', 9.

> explained that if you had a pack of 10 Rothmans then you were gay but you weren't open to anything. But if you had 10 Embassy then that meant you were open for a good time that night. And I looked round, and I don't know whether I was naive or just wasn't looking for it, but everyone's smoking 10 Rothmans or 10 Embassy. So I kept them but stuffed them in my pocket! I didn't know what was going on. It had completely gone over my head, and I'd thought I was streetwise.[386]

Most interviewees had a view on myths, usually from a relatively early memory of smoking. Many of the myths added colour and excitement to the rebellion of smoking – the fact that they were often targeted at brands did little to lessen the appeal of smoking as a whole. In some cases the negative connotations actually acted as an encouragement to align with a dangerous brand as a marker of a more serious rebellion.

Myth, ritual and defined behaviour are important in the context of smoking within any culture, whilst maintaining the perception of ordinariness. Mass Observation's 'Man and His Cigarette', from 1949, details observed differences in how the cigarette might be taken from a packet, how it is tapped, lit, how the ash and butt is disposed of, and how the cigarette is held.[387] In describing the habit, smokers were often clear on what and how their habits took place, but less on why. This is a similar story for many of our interviewees, although some saw a wider social aspect to their habits:

> We haven't talked much about the social thing, the offering each other cigarettes...And talking about the different brands and how you would probably adapt depending on how interested you were in the person that you were smoking with. And never being without a

[386] Kurt (1969), 3.
[387] 'FR 3192 - MAN AND HIS CIGARETTE - Mass Observation Online', https://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Detail/fr-3192-man-and-his-cigarette/19717209?item=19717543.m

> packet of cigarettes, because you could offer them... But there's something about cigarettes as a social transaction. You know that people not only carried cigarettes for their own consumption but also to share.[388]

And rituals also existed to *avoid* the expected social transactions:

> There was a term I thought was very funny – a London Irish bloke, and he called this thing, if you pulled your fags out and no one could see it, a really quick flash, you called it the Ballenderry flash, which I thought was great. It's a bit like not buying your round, isn't it? Because you've all got the same kind of money, more or less. So if you're buying your half a lager, you'd expect them to, you know, buy your round as well, wouldn't you? And you'd remember that week on week on week, wouldn't you?[389]

> At school and at college you get some crafty people. They'd have two packets of cigarettes, one would have one cigarette in. And someone would ask them for a cigarette, and they'd get this packet with one in, and you go 'Oh no it's your last one mate, you're alright'. They were just tight, and they didn't give anyone a cigarette.[390]

The accessories around smoking, primarily the lighter, could be an additional badge, and/or a further extension of a ritual:

> You got that kind of tipping thing, haven't you? With the hard pack you're offering people to pull it out; with the soft pack you're tipping it out, I guess it's a bit cooler. And the other thing was the Zippo lighter. My mate at college - he said he felt the Zippo was part of the reason why people smoke, the motion of having it out.[391]

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[388] 'Grace (1953)', 7.
[389] 'Michael (1959)', 3.
[390] 'Roxy (1968)', 6.
[391] 'Michael (1959)', 3.

> Alongside the cigarette case or the cigarette holder, you'd put your source of fire, as it were, on top. And that carried its own subliminal message. So if somebody had a Zippo lighter, usually that was a rock'n'roll thing. And also, because they were petrol or paraffin, they made the cigarette taste different, on the first puff. It was quite a different sort of experience. And then what we did like to do was to get a posh book of matches with a logo on them. So if you could get a book of matches from the Wolseley restaurant, for example, or the Ritz, then that was the ultimate. You put that on top of your posh cigarettes or your cigarette case. And then the only way to top that would be to have like a proper nice gold lighter, you could get some very nice lighters back in the day. But the books of matches were cool, and rather than rip the match off and then strike it along the thing on the back, you'd do this thing where you'd hold it over and then you kind of do that with your finger and it would light the match. You could also get cases for books of matches especially for ladies. You slotted your book of matches in there and then folded them down and then in the top bit there was a mirror. [392]

> It was cool to have an electronic lighter which you'd put on top of your B&H box. And Marlboro Reds got associated with Zippo lighters, which again has a rugged, outdoorsman, frontiersman, semiology to it.[393]

Opening a packet of cigarettes is a precisely remembered process:

> Smelling once you've taken the foil off. And the first one out and have it slightly sticking out, I think the first one I took out, I'd always just tap on the table. I only used to do it with the first one in the packet - I don't know why. If I got a cigarette from someone and it wasn't your brand, I'd tap it and there'd be that much of a gap where this tobacco would

[392] 'Roxy (1968)', 8.
[393] 'Bob (1969)', 9.

> have gone down, - you'd think 'See, it's a rubbish cigarette – they've put the tobacco in too loose'.[394]
>
> Other people used to open a packet and then always take a cigarette out and put it up the other way around. So the end you light would be at the top, but only one in the packet would be. There were quite a few people who used to do that. So that would of course always be the last cigarette they smoked in the packet.[395]

And how the cigarettes were smoked became a particular and imitative ritual:

> And there was also a certain ritual to how you smoked, how you held your cigarettes; when the Scum play was on television in 78, we all started holding our cigarettes in the way that the characters on Scum did, you get this kind of received wisdom things. And I remember somebody saying Borstal boys hold their cigarettes on the inside of the palm of their hand with the two fingers and kind of raise it up. So you're holding it so if you're in an institution, you can hide that you're holding a cigarette. And I distinctly remember us all, literally the next day at school, everybody holding their fags like that. And drawing in like that and spitting a lot. I think things like that gradually kind of dissipated.[396]

And there were rituals specific to using cigarettes as a base for marijuana:

> So, unpacking a cigarette, you know, getting cigarette papers, rolling it on your favourite sleeve and, you know, sprinkling the stuff in and then sharing. That was a powerful connecting bonding ritual that you did in small groups.[397]

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[394] 'Dave (1962)', 11.
[395] 'Dave (1962)', 8.
[396] 'Bob (1969)', 2.
[397] 'Grace (1953)', 3.

For many, there was a strong association between smoking and social environments, particularly the pub, alongside the need to prove adulthood:

> It's bizarre when you think about it now, but from the age of 14, I was spending a lot of time in pubs. And for many years, I was really never happier than just sitting in a pub with 20 Bensons on the deck and an ashtray and drinking Stella Artois. Just a perfect way to spend the afternoon. So obviously they go together in that way, totally, drinking and smoking. I got sober just a few months before they banned smoking in pubs. And I just can't imagine those poor fuckers standing outside 'Spoons, having a fag and then going back in to finish their drink - I can't imagine anything worse to be honest. The whole point is you sit in there doing them both. So that was a big part of it as well, and that definitely being a grown-up thing. And so, you know, we'd go to the pub and sit in the pub and smoke fags and play pool. It was all about that from the age of 14 or 15.[398]

HOW MUCH?

Another factor aligning youth cultures was a lack of disposable income. A packet of 20 cigarettes rose from c50p in 1975, to 75p in 1985, £2 in 1995 and £3 in 2000.[399] Consequently many of the interviewees described a move to rolling tobacco from the late 80s. The cost of smoking in itself was not questioned that much by ex-smokers, perhaps in line with the idea that smoking was a normal and expected occupation within many social groups, and the relatively modest increases in the first part of 1975-2000. As duty prices increased, however, cheaper brands became attractive, as long as the brand (or lack of brand) didn't matter:

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[398] 'Will (1966)', 8.
[399] 'Office for National Statistics : RPI : Ave Price - Cigarettes 20 King Size Filter', https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/czmp.

> I got into punk about 1978...we kind of moved into the anarcho-punk and Crass inspired sub-genre of punk. People now associate that scene with the crusty thing but that didn't exist until about 1985, 86. So the idea of folk smoking roll ups and drinking cider that just didn't exist then. But everybody did smoke roll ups, but that's probably because a lot of folk were on the dole and staying in shitty flats and stuff like that. So there was genuinely an economic determination for what they smoked.[400]

So cost could affect brand choice, and for some, that meant a move to multiple brands and badges, and even rebadging:

> Supermarket brands and depending what shop you went in, I can't remember that they were that much cheaper, but when you're young and skint, cheaper is cheaper. There were several other brands that you'd smoke but wouldn't be seen dead with. Lambert and Butler, when they came out, they were cheaper. But that wasn't really cool – you didn't want to try and pull with Lambert and Butler! And then when Superkings came out, they were cigarettes for during the week, but not when you went out 'cause you didn't want to appear cheap. Royals was another one that was a during the week cigarette, Getting the extra four cigarettes. But you wouldn't go out with them.[401]

> I left Uni, I fell in with the rave crowd and we were squatting in in Hackney...it took me a while to adapt to that, that what you smoked was actually what you could get when you could afford it. I remember putting Lambert and Butler in Marlboro Lights packets.[402]

And for others, a move away from branding completely:

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[400] 'Bob (1969)', 6.
[401] Kurt (1969),2.
[402] 'Alison (1969)', 7.

> There was a point at which I realised that people were addicted to cigarettes and that actually branding becomes unimportant when you just need your fix and you're on benefits and you just simply can't afford to buy them. And that's when I started to realise, the perniciousness of my habit, when you had to worry about money again. That's the common thread – it's economic - when I started smoking properly, I realised that unless I moved to roll ups, I would have to smoke Lambert and Butler and I think I felt that roll ups were outside because they didn't have that branding.[403]

Other than through a measure of strength, the taste of the cigarette was less of a feature for most interviewees. It's possible that by the 1970's, manufacturing had reduced many of the blend/taste differences to focus on brand as the key defining choice factor. But if so, this was a process that had been developing for some time. In Mass Observation's 'Man and His Cigarette', the author bemoans the move away from selection based entirely on taste before the Second World War:

> Change before the war was seldom entirely promiscuous. Even the vaguest smoker discriminated between Turkish and Virginian blends, scented or unscented, with or without tips. With growing experience, bounds became increasingly narrow, gradually closing in until, by a chancy and often half-conscious process of elimination, all but one brand at a single strength had been excluded.[404]

Compare this to the decision processes in brand selection explored in previous chapters. There were some exceptions; some interviewees had very fixed views on acceptable taste, both positive...:

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[403] 'Alison (1969)', 10.
[404] 'FR 3192 - MAN AND HIS CIGARETTE - Mass Observation Online', 117.

> For me, taste was quite important and Gitanes and Camel Lights in particular had their own taste, which is why I preferred them. John Player Special left a foul taste in my mouth, and kissing a girl who smoked them was pretty bad as well.... For me, the only cigarettes had any taste was Gitanes, and Camel Lights.[405]

> The taste and the smell (of Pall Mall). I mean, they're a bit like Camels, but they were slightly less so. Camels were very aromatic and quite strong. They made you cough very badly. And Marlboros were ok, and Chesterfields were great, but they were often stale because very few people smoked Chesterfield in Britain, so they'd sit on the shelf for months and so they'd go stale. For some reason, Pall Malls in those days always seemed to be fresh.[406]

...and negative:

> I lived in America for a few years, so I smoked Marlboro in America. But apart from that, always B&H. You know other brands; Camels are alright, I probably knew a couple of those people who smoked Camels. Marlboro, or Marlboro Lights, B&H. That's about it, really. But you ain't going to get anyone smoking a Rothmans in a rave. You never know anyone who fucking smokes Rothmans. And they're vile as well, they're repulsive. I always used to joke that they've got something different in their DNA, Rothmans smokers. You discover that at an early age when you're doing all that experimenting with brands, that they really are revolting, and, you know you try and scrounge a fag off of someone and they offer you a Rothmans, and you're, 'oh, man'. But there are people who - that's their brand and they love them.[407]

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[405] 'Nathan (1959)', 5.
[406] 'Oscar (1960)', 3.
[407] 'Will (1966)', 3.

Both cost and taste had little real impact on the majority of interviewees; of much more significance were the influences of peers and public figures. This chapter illustrates that our interviewees were influenced as much by proximity to a group or influence as by membership. This is in line with greater availability of influences, and an ability to take what was attractive from one or more subcultures for their own particular needs; for cigarettes this was about having the right defining brand, which might change over time as style changed. In fact this change was necessary – the cultural permission to move to a mix and match style, to wear clothes from a different subcultures at the same time, to listen to multiple genres of music, was in line with Hebdige's writings on bricolage, but at an individual basis. Most interviewees would see themselves as part of what Williams would call emergent cultures, if we summarise these as new and challenging, and yet the act of smoking itself was an ordinary leveller across class, albeit with brand differentiation. Two further observations from our interviewees are pertinent here. Firstly, it was possible for individualism to shift to common ground but within the context of an emergent culture, for example in the case of Marlboro Lights, which had massive take up from young people in the 1990s. As such, the brand reflected back into the cultural group ('…everyone was smoking Marlboro Lights').[408] Secondly, several of the interviewees talked of giving up smoking as a signal to move into a more dominant culture:

> I gave up in 2011 – it was the classic thing of going to kiss my daughter at bedtime and her saying 'you stink, Daddy', and I thought 'I have to do something about this'. It wasn't that hard to stop – I ended up going on the pills – I had one cigarette on them and it tasted disgusting, and I haven't smoked since. [409]

[408] 'John (1971)', 5.
[409] 'Harry (1975)', 3.

> It's definitely part of my image as an alternative person that which I think I was until I was about 30. It was part of my image for sure. I did think that smoking was definitely quite a cool thing to do. And I just didn't give a second thought to the health aspect of it until I was well into my 30s. My son was born in 2006. That's why I stopped smoking.[410]

Thus cigarettes marked the move away from subcultural and other influences, as well as the entry point.

In summary, the act of smoking and the affinity with brands could be seen as supporting many of the features of subcultural membership. But it could also be used to blur the boundaries of membership, to step into unfamiliar territory, to develop individualism, to support and develop sub-subcultures, and to transition into and away from subcultures. There was a role for the cigarette to take within and beyond ordinary behaviour, and this is explored further in the concluding chapter.

[410] 'Steve (1961)', 5.

5. CONCLUSIONS

If we knew the health implications, I don't think the smoking generation would have happened. It was just 'smoking's bad for you'. That's all my mum used to say and a few non-smokers, which were mainly women in my community, would say 'that's bad for you'. But they didn't really say anything about lung cancer, circulation, emphysema, COPD and asthma. It just 'it's bad for you'. You couldn't smoke if you were a kid, you'd get smacked if you were young and they caught you like at school when they caught me. But they never said why it was bad, just the fact you weren't old enough.[411]

More money was spent on tobacco advertising in the twentieth century than the advertising of any other product.[412] The patterns of marketing changed greatly after the Second World War, as cigarettes were reconsidered as lifestyle and consumer products, alongside a recognition that confirmed their health impacts. By the mid-1970s, marketing was also coming to terms with government restrictions and a voluntary code that prohibited targeting of cigarette advertising to the young.

There is little doubt that marketing agencies contravened this voluntary code, and aimed to actively recruit young smokers, to effectively replace older smokers who had either given up or had died. This coincided with new marketing thinking on packaging and badge products, as outlined in chapter one. The agencies also moved the marketing spend into new and innovative areas, taking a lead in subliminal (and occasionally surreal) brand advertising, and moving into sports and arts sponsorship as a means to promote an alliance with aspirational performance.

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[411] 'Liam (1966)', 7.
[412] Vaknin, Judy, Smoke Signals: 100 Years of Tobacco Advertising. London: Middlesex University Press, 2007

The marketing messages didn't always land as intended for young people, particularly with more traditional ATL advertising. Instead, the brand values of cigarette types were formed by other fashionable factors and the usage by peers, elders and media heroes. The cigarette's use as a symbol of rebellion and the opportunities for brand affiliation (ahead of, then alongside, designer and sports labels) allowed it to become a key part of identity, both during and after adolescence, as explored above in chapter three.

Additionally, the rise in popular individualism noted in chapter four evidenced itself across cigarette smoking – certain brands were considered to be from a previous generation as much as they were from a particular class, and brands might be split for smokers between the everyday cigarette and the one that might form part of the myth and performance of a cultural group. This was perhaps an echo of movements in subcultures and youth groups being driven by music and media as much as previous groups had been driven by class – there was a general acceptance into most subcultures that could transcend class and focus more on entry through style or passion for the culture. Most interviewees were conscious of class, but that became less relevant when considering their passions – the references to Bowie or Brilleaux in chapter five, for example, talk about the manner of smoking rather than its relevance to class: 'The reason I started smoking is basically because I idolised David Bowie, and Bowie was always seen with this very cool Gitanes wafting about'.[413]; 'Lee Brilleaux's way with a cig was legendary. And we certainly aspired to smoke like Lee'.[414]

Interviewees talked of the cigarette brand as an extra badge of allegiance to what might already be a fairly eclectic set of symbols which in their own way were safe and ordinary, yet pooled together to create a challenging yet acceptable style. In chapter three, John summarises this:

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[413] 'Frank (1960)', 1.
[414] 'Zach (1958)', 2.

> I'm not a poseur. I'm not smoking something ostentatiously foreign and weird. I'm not a wannabe Yank. But I've got this little niche for myself…I'm trying to create an identity. Like I don't listen to Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd. I listen to The Smiths and New Order. I don't listen to Duran Duran and Wham, I listen to the Pixies….I'm not listening to Prog….this is my brand because there's no association to them.[415]

What the cigarette brand said about the smoker became a firm part of both self-identity and identity within a group. And, for most young smokers, the influences on brand choice in particular came from observation and interaction with peers, family and cultural leaders, as well as from marketing messages. In drawing conclusions from this study, we'll follow the order of the chapters, starting with Marketing, and following with Identity; Ordinariness and Subcultures.

Why did the marketing so often miss the target? Partly because a young demographic's relationship with subcultures made them slightly more skeptical than their parents' generation, who were easier to target with traditional ATL advertising. But what did work was the consumer led perception of attractive packaging and 'myth' and 'prestige' of brands, together with clear brand values, e.g. Benson and Hedges' imagined quirky Britishness or the illusory libertarian Americana of Marlboro, which interviewees found attractive even when viewed ironically. And whilst certain brand marketing was far from direct, e.g. the clear freshness of Consulate or the cleverness of B&H's surreal campaign, it is unlikely that these would have been as successful without the myth-making consumer support.

For many reasons, including the increasing pressure on advertising bans, marketeers were forced to diversify. Campaigns were localised or globalised through sponsorship – sports events allowed brands to operate alongside patriotic interest and pride. The

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[415] 'John (1971)', 8.

marketing/consumer relationship became complicated as young consumers managed their own development against a 'cool' yardstick, which for young cigarette smokers might be about attraction to women, class credentials, or showing rebellion through buying (and displaying) the strongest or most exotic brand possible. Marketeers would have been aware of the adolescent challenge of fitting in against being individual, but the nature of advertising in this time meant that only reaching the large audiences would be cost effective. To maximise their impact, marketeers in the late 80s made a relatively successful attempt to co-create the culture, aligning brand coolness and consumption to British youth – the CDP quotes in chapter two illustrate this strongly and chillingly. In summary, the importance of marketing was often overrated and often missed its target, working against youth thinking or ironically repurposed, and often in opposition to cultural pressures. Notwithstanding this, the opportunities afforded to marketeers in the late 80s allowed them to influence brand choice across social groups, and thereby strongly influence their behaviour and cohesion.

Much has been written about marketing practices, and I am indebted to the CfTRs papers that expose some of the nefarious practices. There is a great deal of research into why and how young people smoke from a health and habit perspective. There's also a good deal of research into the effectiveness of advertising, although as we have seen in chapter three, some of this cannot claim to be independent. But to look at smoking from the remembered perspective of the young smoker has given a unique view of the way in which marketing worked, against the many other influences in a young person's life.

Cigarettes were not only a key part of identity but were often front and centre for driving the identity – smoking was important but in the form of identity, the badge could be even more so, as evidenced by the brand groups and transactional limits mentioned above. And in dealing with the young person's dichotomy of fitting in against being individual, branded cigarettes allowed this, within parameters. A safe statement of identity was possible; because smoking itself was ordinary, and because the parameters were fairly wide, it was possible for that

individual or group statement to be made safely even if it was, relatively extraordinary. Chapter three illustrates how the dichotomy could be addressed – by remembering the cigarette as a symbol of identity, the young person could be both ordinary and extraordinary. The arguments in chapter three regarding femininity complement Elliot's and Tinkler's findings for the earlier period and extend them into the 1975-2000; the arguments challenge Jacobson's views on feminine smoking as a challenge to subservience. Mort's (1996) and Connell's (1995) writings on masculinity and consumption are supported by primary and contemporary evidence.

Marketing impact would have been even less impactful had the young generations beyond 1975 not been so receptive to new ideas. The mass-media, mass-consumption age had taken root, and as a result, exposure to subcultures in particular meant that a young person could pick up a behaviour, a style or a product and integrate it into their lives without either committing to a membership or facing consequences. This, together with the background of cigarette smoking being in itself an ordinary activity, meant that young people could not only smoke themselves and be considered ordinary, but also take on brand values without straying too far from a safe and ordinary existence. The empirical evidence in chapter four aims to enrich our understanding of everyday life and ordinariness in the late 20th century through the lens of smoking practices.

Ordinariness was effectively redefined in the 70s and 80s, across family, school, work, class and social environments, to accept a level of rebellion from young people, together with a natural endorsement of extraordinary things contributing to the ordinary being. A good example of this endorsement is with cigarettes – most people were smokers before they were brand affiliates, being a smoker was a more important sign of ordinary identity that a specific marketing badge. Further, cigarettes could be seen as part of an enabling mechanism to allow rebellion and consumption to become ordinary.

The study of subcultures shifted when considering post 80s culture, and an understanding that membership was not essential for the subculture to influence and be influenced. This is in line

with our interviewees, who mainly felt that they could take what they needed from cultural groups and repurpose them for individual or smaller group needs. The right cigarette brand could be important to this but was not necessarily any more fixed than the transient bricolage styles. It was possible for example in the case of Marlboro Lights, for a brand to be reflected back into the cultural group as a defining object of membership. Cigarettes were good examples of agents of subcultural blending and consequent individual identity, but also went some way to form their own cultural groups at both transactional and allegiance levels; some interviewees spoke of not taking from or offering to (say) Silk Cut smoker; others spoke positively of fellow (say) Marlboro smokers in the same terms as any other club. Equally, the divisions (including class) that defined subcultural theory were often bridged through cigarette smoking, as above, this might be at a general smoking level, or by brand. The discussion and primary evidence on subcultural fluidity and complexity via smoking practices offers a novel angle on the decline of non-permeable, boundaried subcultures – there has been limited academic study into this aspect of subcultural behaviours. Similarly, studies on joining subcultures far outweigh those on leaving them - a final conclusion on subcultural impact was the feedback from interviewees that smoking cessation coincided with a move to a dominant culture – cigarettes could mark the entry point into a subculture, but they could equally mark the exit.

There are lessons in our consideration of marketing dangerous products to the young consumer in the future. The marketing of vapes and ultra processed foods (UPF) in the UK are continuing to follow similar patterns of marketing to the young, often in a less governed environment. Packaging and promotion are following very similar patterns to cigarette marketing of the 1970s and 1980s, but with even more obvious focus on the young consumer. And in a relatively non-regulated environment, they are an easy sell – the quote from ‘Thank you for smoking’ could

easily be construed as a contemporary quote about both vaping and UHP foods: 'they're cool and available and addictive. The job is almost done for us!'[416]

Vapes occupy a similar functional role as the cigarettes of chapters three and four – they allow the ordinary and the extraordinary to coexist as part of an identity; they can offer the opportunity for a soft rebellion; they can be seen as both masculine and feminine, and essentially, they are a symbol of adulthood. There is a clear linkage too, in how subcultural groups can form around vaping in early school years, and later into social environments.

A number of factors, many of which are covered in this thesis, contributed to the decline of adolescent smoking, but as of 2022, 11.6% of 16-24 year olds and 16.5% of 25-34 year olds were smokers - lower than the respective 2000 numbers (32% and 35%[417]), but still a long way short of the progress that could be expected from the twin pressures of taxation and health awareness.[418] If we applied the curve of take-up and decline to the new generation of harmful consumables, and the results of direct and indirect marketing learnt from the lessons of tobacco advertising, then we could confidently expect these products to be causing significant damage for many decades to come.

[416] *Thank You for Smoking*.
[417] 'Adult Smoking Habits in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics'.
[418] 'Population of Current Smokers by Age UK 2022 | Statista', https://www.statista.com/statistics/1189201/uk-population-of-current-smokers-by-age/.

APPENDIX A – CASE STUDY – MARLBORO LIGHTS

Marlboro Lights were introduced to the UK in 1986. Although they were clearly a Marlboro branded product, the marketing next to the flagship Marlboro Red brand was differentiating and disassociating:

> I think the Reds were (aligned to America). Because they were always marketed with the cowboy, but I think the Marlboro Lights were something else for some reason. I just wouldn't see them as American at all. But the Reds? Definitely, yeah.[419]

Print advertising was limited, and targeted to lifestyle and youth magazines, and was complemented by campaigns that would spread the product by word of mouth and fashionable association. The burgeoning world of the supermodel was associated with Marlboro Lights – the new folk heroines were said to exist on a diet of black coffee and Marlboro Lights in the new swinging London of the 1990s. Celebrities like Kate Moss became the unofficial brand ambassadors of Marlboro Lights.[420] Product placement on TV series that were popular with young people (X-Files, Sex and The City, The Sopranos) was key. And the introduction of Marlboro Lights as the fashionable cigarette in the subcultures of the early 90s drove demand – by the end of the century, Marlboro Lights outsold

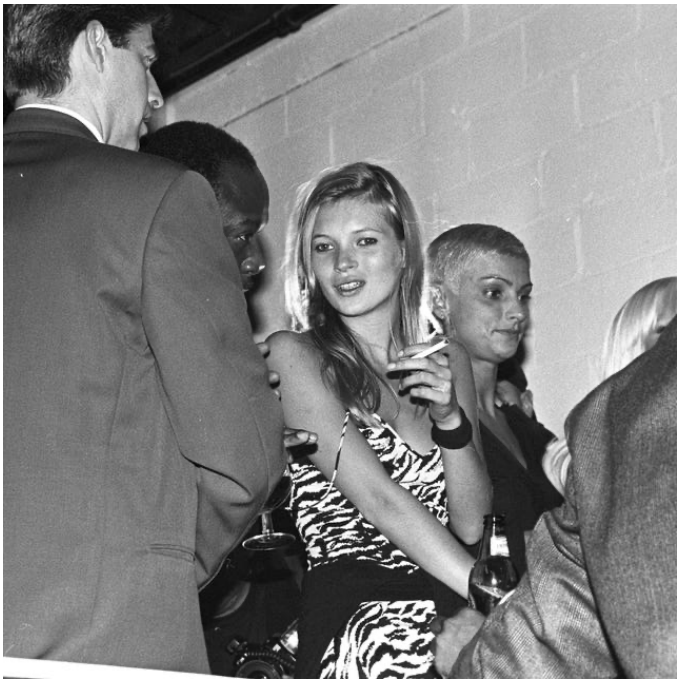

Figure 24 - Kate Moss, New York (1995)
Getty Images

[419] 'Ian (1972)', 6.
[420] Simon Mills, 'The One Cigarette (and One Supermodel Smoker) That Ruled 90s London', *Esquire*, 9 March 2023.

Marlboro Reds by 5:1, and held 6% of the overall UK market share.[421] But Marlboro Lights seemed to exist outside the confines of traditional marketing and, to some extent, within subculture:

> I don't recall advertising for Marlboro Lights at all, so there was none of that connotation that the Reds had. It was Marlboro Lights it's a light version of this; it wasn't quite so heavy on the masculinity, perhaps when I say masculinity, I mean, representational masculinity. Marlboro Reds were very much like an older thing, which you could pick up as a younger person and play with as part of your presentation. But Lights were disconnected to this by a degree. You were buying into a little bit of a coolness of the brand. But there was much more because there was no immediate advertising that would come to mind. It existed separately in that sense, but it's still pulled on the traditional, this is what your grandparents might have smoked, and that's not a bad thing. There's a lot of contradictions in this because I suppose subcultural style is in its essence, quite contradictory.[422]

Marlboro Lights were about style, at a time when style was redefined to be young, sophisticated, eclectic and often ironic:

> And so we were all wearing silver Bowie suits and tiepins and just looking ridiculous…all basically the same, smoked the same cigarettes and went into a larger group of about a dozen people. I would imagine that we were all buying *The Face* and *i-D* by that time, and I'd put money on it that Marlboro Lights were heavily advertising in the style mags. And that could well have been a conscious factor.[423]

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[421] Kamal Ahmed and Jamie Doward, 'Now Put out the Lights', *The Observer*, 24 August 2003
[422] Alison (1969), 9.
[423] 'Bob (1969)', 4.

> Marlboro Lights was a cool brand. Because the Marlboro red - the advertising was horrible...But Marlboro, 'cause, we'd all grown up on Silk Cuts and like maybe it's a slightly milder thing and full strength Marlboro is smoking and just a bit too much. And they had soft packets, which would break with your jeans 'cause we all wore jeans, so we never really took up Marlboro, and Marlboro Lights came out, and they were just cool. I can't remember an advert, but it was just that Marlboro Lights just became the cool brand. Like everyone started smoking them in my social circle, going into indie gigs, going into indie pubs, everyone smoked Marlboro Lights. They were better than Silk Cut, but they weren't as strong and weird as regular Marlboro and B&H. They weren't as harsh on your lungs. Girls liked them. They didn't have any previous associations of being an old person's brand... it was Marlboro Lights and Calvin Klein One - I guess they must have been next to each other in the magazines. It's just for me in my head, it's what came out around then? All the girls smelt of CK One and everyone was smoking Marlboro Lights.[424]

> In that period (1989-1990), it was all Marlboro Lights. They seemed to be everywhere. They were a poseurs fag. They were rubbish, but they were the brand to be seen with. I think they were quite new at the time. I'm not sure what year they came out, but I seem to remember them coming from nowhere, and everybody was smoking them. So when I think of that phase, I'm thinking it's Marlboro Lights all the way - as iconic as the Trainspotting poster and the CK One aftershave. I just see them as part of that time. [425]

Marlboro Lights were phenomenally successful because of what they were not, as much as what they were. They weren't perceived as mild like Silk Cut, although they purported to be low tar, nor did they have the strength of a Marlboro Red (comparative tar levels: Silk Cut 5mg,

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[424] John (1971), 5.
[425] 'Ian (1972)', 6.

Marlboro Lights 8mg, Marlboro Reds 13mg), but these were two other established brands of the time, and popular with younger smokers. The way in which they became popular was not through direct marketing, but by casual introduction into social groups as a stylistic accessory, complementing the other on-trend styles of the late 1980s.

APPENDIX B – LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND KEY SOURCES

INTERVIEWS

Pseudonym	Year of Birth	Smoking history
Adam	1961	Smoked Dunhill then Silk Cut in 80's
Bill	1961	Smoked Marlboro, late 70's & 80's
Clare	1962	Smoked St Moritz and More in the 80's
Dave	1962	Smoked Marlboro, late 70's, 80's & 90's
Eddie	1970	Started smoking at c16, mainly of cannabis access
Frank	1960	Smoked in the 70's, 80's & 90's, mainly British cigarettes
Grace	1953	Started smoking at college, mainly Silk Cut/menthol
Harry	1975	Smoked Marlboro Lights in 80's & 90's
Ian	1972	Smoked a variety of brands in 80's & 90's
John	1971	Mainly Embassy in 80's; Marlboro Lights in 90's
Kurt	1969	Variety of mainly British cigarettes in 90's
Liam	1966	Smoked mainly Embassy in 80's & 90's
Michael	1959	Smoked in 70's, 80's, 90's - mainly Silk Cut in latter years
Nathan	1964	Smoked in 80's & 90's - Gitanes or Silk Cut
Oscar	1960	Smoked in 70's, 80's & 90's - primarily Pall Mall
Pete	1967	Smoked in 80's & 90's, French cigarettes then RYO
Roxy	1968	Smoked in 80's & 90's, usually Silk Cut
Steve	1961	Smoked a variety of brands in 70's, 80's & 90's
Tom	1962	Smoked in 70's, 80's & 90's, mainly Marlboro & RYO
Victor	1965	Smoked a variety of brands in 70's, 80's & 90's
Will	1966	Primarily B&H in 80's & 90's
Zach	1958	Smoked in 70's, 80's & 90's - B&H, then Kent
Alison	1969	Smoked variety of brands late 80's & 90's
Bob	1969	Smoked a variety of brands in 80's & 90's

PARLIAMENTARY ARCHIVES

Physical access via https://archives.parliament.uk/; also digitized at www.tobaccopapers.com.

ADVERTISING MATERIAL

Physical access via History of Advertising Trust; see https://www.hatads.org.uk/

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